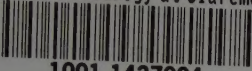


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THE SCRIPTS OF CLEOPHAS

A Reconstruction of Primitive Christian Documents

Recorded by

GERALDINE CUMMINS

With a Prefatory Note by John Lamond, D.D.

SECOND EDITION

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I know personally, Miss Cummins, through whose instrumentality *The Scripts of Cleophas* has been given to the world. I have personally witnessed her writing and can testify that copy amounting to upwards of 1714 words was produced in one hour and ten minutes. From my own experience of writing this was altogether supernormal. Miss Cummins makes no claim to special knowledge of the period (Apostolic) of which she writes.

Eminent theologians and other authorities have witnessed the production of parts of these Scripts.

The editors, whose names I am not permitted to disclose and who are responsible for the Introduction, are recognised scholars representing the Church and the Universities; and I fully endorse their views as to the intrinsic merits of the book. I read it with an ever-increasing interest. Should it be accepted at its face value, it will become an epoch-making volume. The writer sheds fresh light on the labours of Paul and the other Apostles, and gives a new meaning to several passages in the Acts of the Apostles which otherwise would be obscure. But above all, it is valuable in adding additional testimony that Jesus the Christ was a real person, the Founder of the Church which bears His Name.

JOHN LAMOND, D.D., Edin.

May 31st, 1928.

INTRODUCTION

THE volume here presented to the public is only a first instalment, in itself self-contained and complete, of the first three *Scripts of Cleophas*, which consist of a long series of scripts produced through Miss Geraldine D. Cummins, but purporting to be ultimately communicated by one Cleophas, a Christian convert of the first century.

Miss Cummins, the daughter of the late Professor Ashley Cummins, of Cork, has achieved distinction both in sport and in the literary world. She has played hockey for Ireland, and is an enthusiast for tennis; at the same time she is the author of a novel of Irish peasant life, *The Land They Loved* (Macmillan, 1919), and also, in collaboration with Miss Susanne R. Day, of two Irish peasant plays, *Broken Faith*, produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and *Fox and Geese*, produced there and also at the Court Theatre, London. Miss Cummins has contributed to the Press articles on matters connected with the theatre, and has reviewed novels and plays for literary papers. Having a view to the content of the scripts, it is important to remember that, though Miss Cummins has read a great deal, her reading has been confined, for the most part, to the works of such modern writers as Shaw, Galsworthy, Yeats, etc.; she has never studied theology, theosophy, philosophy, or Christian origins.

The production of every word of *The Scripts of Cleophas* has been witnessed by Miss E. Beatrice Gibbes, a lady whose main interests are music, gardening, and travel. She has visited Australia, New Zealand, North and South America, India, Japan, Greece, Switzerland, and other countries, but never either Egypt or Palestine. She is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and a reader mainly of books of travel. Miss Gibbes made the acquaintance of Miss Cummins early in 1923, and states that she has never been in the least interested in early Church history, or in the Church, and professes ignorance of anything appertaining to either.

The first sittings with Miss Gibbes began in December 1923, when Miss Cummins could only write for a quarter of an hour at a time, as her "power" then gave out. The time gradually increased, until she could write for two hours without interruption, and in

December 1925 the writing was continued over a period of two hours and twenty minutes. Normally, Miss Cummins is not a rapid writer, and has to work rather laboriously, and with many corrections, to produce 600 or 700 words in a couple of days. When producing these writings, Miss Cummins places her left hand over her eyes, the elbow resting on the table; the right hand is thus free to hold the pencil over a wad of single foolscap sheets. In a few minutes she appears to lapse into a condition of semi-trance, and her pencil travels over the paper rapidly, producing legible and perfectly intelligible script. Someone at her side removes each page as it is covered, exposing a clear sheet. Generally this writing is without pause or correction. No "t's" are crossed, no "i's" dotted, as the pencil never leaves the surface of the paper. The speed attained, as contrasted with Miss Cummins's normal rate of writing is very remarkable. On February 16th, 1926, 2,230 words were written without a pause in one hour and thirty-eight minutes, On March 16th, 1926, in the presence of four witnesses, 1,750 words were written in one hour and five minutes (equivalent to 1,615 words per hour). On other occasions over 2,600 words of close narrative that required no correction have been written at a sitting. The speed of writing and the length of the sitting vary with the physical and mental conditions. The usual time of uninterrupted writing is a little over an hour and a half.

The editors have satisfied themselves as to the genuineness and disinterestedness of the part played by Miss Cummins and her associate, Miss Gibbes, in the production of these records.

In origin and in subject, the chronicle will probably suggest to many comparison with the revelation of "The lowly life and bitter passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother" made to the German Augustinian nun, Anna Katharina Emmerich, and generally received by Roman Catholics as divinely inspired. Since the first edition of these revelations appeared in 1833, many further German editions have been exhausted, and translations have been made into English, Italian, and French. Eminent Catholic theologians and divines have examined the work both as a record of fact and as claiming to be a revelation, and the verdict is that the details, where they can be tested, are unquestionably correct, and the inspiration indubitably genuine. Such a decision appears to strengthen the case for the present publication. The verifiable facts of geography, history, terminology, and such-like strewn up and down the following pages, have been to a considerable extent examined by experts, and pronounced accurate and sound, and some examples will be given later in this Introduction; the editors feel, moreover, that, on the same principles of revelation,

those expert theologians who approved the German work would probably not hesitate to place this present publication in a similar rank. In some respects, the case is stronger here than for the other. Sister Emmerich narrated her visions to the poet Clement Brentano, who noted down only the chief heads, filling out the story from his recollection. He certainly read over to the nun the pages he had written, but it is obviously not improbable that the revelation owed something to him beyond its actual form. No such second intermediary occurs in the transmission of what is here reported. Neither Miss Cummins nor the editors have interposed anything of their own. The matter of this book is not the writing up of something revealed only in the mind's eye, or by narration; it is, in its actual form, a dictated message, the direct transcript of an unseen original of originals; it therefore merits all the more serious scrutiny and examination.

The editors do not claim any authority for these documents, and do not here attempt to offer any explanation of their origin, though they are convinced that the suggestion which might be made by followers of Dr. Morton Prince, of subconscious memory on the part of Miss Cummins, is altogether divested of probability by what is said above of her interests and education, and by what they personally know of these in fuller detail. The only claims they do make are for the fidelity of the transcription and for their own disinterestedness in the publication. The narrative is transmitted through the "Messenger", who is not its actual author. He demands from Miss Cummins mere receptivity and passivity. At times he talks as a scribe to whom another is giving the words, and sometimes complains that his words get "twisted" in transmission. But "words" is not to be taken too literally. It is rather that a thought is communicated through the vehicle of the words and images stored in the memory of the writer who acts as intermediary. "If the spirit of the hand that writes is prepared and rightly shaped, then it will receive the true story of an ancient happening."¹

The whole attempt at communication is made "at the bidding of" one Cleophas, or Clopas, who is, however, "too far removed from man to commune with him."

Indeed, in this communication there are stated to be seven scribes who are guided by Cleophas, and the "ancient word," which they possessed in purity and integrity, is shaped by them into a form in keeping with modern thought and expression.

The "Messenger" states that the chronicle he is now setting forth

¹ The quotations given in this Introduction are from the scripts; some are from portions not included in this volume.

was known in the Early Church, though only a few copies existed, and these have perished ; but he also speaks of Cleophas as drawing from more chronicles than one, and of himself as fashioning the whole into a single chronicle. As the "Messenger" puts it, Cleophas "plucks from the Tree of Memory all these matters that had been within his knowledge," gives them to the Scribe, who gives them to the "Messenger," who enters into the thoughts of the writer, "drawing from the words I do find in this floating mind that is about the handmaid. It containeth many words, so I shape my tale in the words I thus find." In this mind the thoughts brought to it by the "Messenger" are reflected : "It is a mirror which is more than a glass ; if there were not words within the handmaid's mind, the thought we cast upon the still pool would not be imagined there. So it is hard for us to give you a word or name that doth not lie within her memory." For this reason, mention is occasionally made of the difficulty of the transmission of proper names.

Later communications from the "Messenger" have provided the interesting information that the original writings from which these chronicles are drawn were put together between sixty and seventy years after the birth of Christ, though certain portions are of slightly later date. Their authors were men who had themselves seen and heard the Apostles, and who wrote, for the most part, at Ephesus or Antioch, using either Greek or, less frequently, Aramaic or Hebrew. Whether these facts, supplied by the "Messenger," furnish any criterion for the documents here presented, must be left by the editors to the judgment of those competent to decide.

The "Messenger" represents himself as one who in his lifetime on earth was a man of rather exceptional knowledge, especially of Oriental languages, and at the present time as unusually fitted to utilize what he calls the "heavy brain of man" to transmit his conceptions. He disclaims all kinship with great men, but does claim to have travelled much, to have preached to "barbarians in southern lands," and to have been much in Rome. A singular point is that he seems unacquainted with the actual conditions of things on this earth ; e.g., he does not know about the invention of printing, as evidenced by his insistence that "scribes" should make many copies of his communications, and he admonishes us to be watchful, "as scribes make many errors." His laudable purpose is that we "should live once again the lives of sorrow and peril, wonder and beauty, of the brethren and followers of our Lord, that faith in our Master Christ should blossom anew."

Whatever may be regarded as the ultimate and adequate explanation of this record, it is all very curious and thought-provoking.

The manner in which the reader will approach its consideration will depend upon the inner convictions with which he confronts the book, rather than upon any evidence it is possible for the editors to supply. The assurance of sincerity on the part of the recipient of the script is no guarantee of the trustworthiness of the ultimate source, and affords no clue to its nature. Some readers may regard it as a communication from a supramundane intelligence. Others, acquainted with modern psychological developments, will possibly look for a purely human explanation, and may be inclined to attribute much to unconscious telepathic influence. In publishing this instalment of these scripts, the editors believe they are serving many diverse interests, and they offer it for enquiry and examination from every angle. The scripts from which it has been prepared are reproduced with entire fidelity to the original manuscript, except for slight and very occasional changes of construction, where that was awkward, or of phrasing, where that seemed needlessly archaistic. The excision of several passages, containing over-elaborated detail not strictly relevant to the narrative, or repetitions of incidents already recounted, has been necessary to reduce the material to manageable size, but the reader is assured that no liberties have been taken with the meaning of the text, and that nothing has been either omitted or incorporated which would alter the original communications in any essential. The scripts from which the present text has been transcribed have been preserved entire and intact.

The contents of this present volume demand some explanatory remarks.

They supplement the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul to this extent, that they furnish an account of the Early Church and the Apostles from immediately after the death of Christ to St. Paul's departure from Berea for Athens (Acts xvii. 15). This account shows signs of independence of the Scripture narrative, and does not appear either to be based upon it or even to owe it much. The "Messenger" is not apparently conscious of the existence of the Holy Writ, and declares: "I have not the knowledge of those parts of the Holy Writings that have been preserved." The script contains material which both supplements and explains what we know from the New Testament, and, moreover, it supplies information which the Bible furnishes either incompletely or not at all. On the one hand, the experiences of St. Paul after his conversion are here (pp. 75 ff.) set forth with a fullness unknown to the New Testament. Students of St. Paul's life will find it interesting and instructive to compare the account in Acts ix. with the

longer and more detailed account given on pp. 71 ff. If it be remembered that the incidents narrated in the first twelve chapters of the Acts occupy in all only some thirty separate days, while the chapters themselves cover a period of, at the very least, nine years, it will easily be seen that an immense portion of apostolic history has escaped record by the biblical historian. If the present record be in any wise authentic, it is undoubtedly to be regarded as a most momentous contribution to our knowledge of apostolic times. It contains much which, in consideration of the life and mentality of the intermediary, Miss Cummins, appears quite inexplicable on the supposition of human authorship. Only an unusually careful and profound student could have been responsible for giving to the head of the Jewish community in Antioch his accurate title of "Archon." Not long before the time when, presumably, the chronicle of Cleophas was written, the head of the Jewish community was called the *Ethnarch*, but when the organisation and government of the cities was altered by the Emperor Augustus in A.D. 11, the title of the head of the Jewish communities was changed from *Ethnarch* to *Archon*. It would have been a pardonable error if the chronicle had used the title *Ethnarch* instead of *Archon*, especially as the writer lived in Palestine, where the Jews were ruled by the Sanhedrin ; but the use of the comparatively new title *Archon* is an example of that exact knowledge on the part of the writer which is to be found in many other striking details only noticeable, perhaps, to those who are themselves authorities.

Over and above this detailed knowledge, there are examples of insight which would appear to suggest a contemporary. The characters of the Twelve Apostles are described with an understanding and sympathy which is remarkable, and the account of Judas is hardly one for which a modern writer could take the credit. Most people now believe that he betrayed Jesus from covetousness. If the relevant passages in the Gospels¹ be examined, it will be seen that there is no justification for this idea. The idea of covetousness was a later inference, because no other reason for the betrayal is mentioned. In fact, it has always been something of a difficulty to explain what it was that really prompted the betrayal. But the Chronicle, in indicating disappointed ambition as the reason, helps to solve the difficulty. And in this connection one cannot help recalling the fact that of the three Apostles, St. Peter confessedly occupied a position of supremacy, while the other two aspired to

¹ Matt. xxvi. 14, 15; Mark xiv. 10, 11; Luke xxii. 3-6; John xiii. 2, 27, 30; and in Acts i. 16-25.

places of particular honour in the Kingdom (Mark x. 35 ff.). Ambition was clearly not confined to Judas (cf. Mark ix. 34); but, while Christ's teaching on humility was laid to heart by the other Apostles, he seems to have turned a deaf ear to it. At any rate, every impartial reader will allow that the chronicle here offers a helpful elucidation of a difficult point; while not in the least controverting anything that is said in the Gospels, it supplements them in one particular and corroborates them in others.

But, while it may be thus claimed that this chronicle usefully supplements and explains the scriptural account, it is not altogether by the canonical standard that it is best to be measured. A candid reader will be struck by the existence and the recurrence of magical phenomena, and may possibly object that Christianity, as here represented, is by no means that pure and spiritual force represented in the New Testament. The chronicle itself may not move on a high spiritual or philosophical level; it may occasionally manifest an open dislike of secular intellectual criticism. Thus the "Messenger" says: "The message of Christ is for the unlearned, it is for the multitude. And the Pharisees and Sadducees of your day will not hearken unto the chronicle which I bear you." Less easy to justify, perhaps, than this distrust and dislike of the philosophical or purely rational spirit, is the absence, at times, of high religious tone. For example, the account of the death of Ananias and Sapphira, makes Peter acquiescently instrumental in the death of both, in smiting them by a murderous occult force for an offence which did not in itself deserve death, and the attempted palliation of this by ascribing to Ananias machinations against the "Brethren" would be little more than the justification of the murder of a political opponent.

This whole story is characteristic of Cleophas's naïve enjoyment of thaumaturgic phenomena. Christianity would appear to the chronicler to be largely the result of a mighty agency—capable even of killing one of whom you disapproved—which has got under the occasional control of the "Brethren," since they alone are able to conjure it up. The purely spiritual nature of this agency appears quite secondary to its rather spasmodically exercised power of blasting all opposition. This is, of course, a very low level of religious development—the magical. Such phenomena are certainly reported in the canonical Scriptures as acts of the Apostles; but, in their case, as in our Lord's they were strictly subordinated to the inculcation of purely spiritual truth. In Cleophas, however, the chief distinction between the "Brethren" and their critics and enemies is not so much in their conviction of spiritual truth as in

the possession of superhuman powers; their chief arguments are "signs and wonders."

Yet, while such features do exist within these pages, the objection that their presence detracts from the worth of the book misses the point that precisely these outcroppings of very human and sometimes very un-Christian emotions are a certain guarantee of the psychological truth and the historical trustworthiness of the picture. The present volume may, in many senses, be uncononical, and yet, none the less, be of incalculable value. To assume, however, that the editors would place it on a level of the New Testament books and judge it by their standard, is to cast upon them the imputation of a facile credulity. Early Christian literature furnishes more exact standards of comparison than that. Perhaps the closest parallel will be found in some of the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles, or in the half-authentic, half-romantic Christian historical novels, which go back, in all probability, to the second century itself. We do well to remember that not even Apostolic Christianity was free from a certain admixture of elements from the philosophy and civilisation of paganism; the very pages of the New Testament show numerous examples of easy acquiescence, superstitious belief, and half-hearted practice. Certainly, these apocryphal acts, if in one sense entirely unhistorical, do provide a useful view of the condition of Christian society in the early ages of the Church; and it is by this known, if by no means exalted, level that these pages are most suitably to be measured. There is, for example, a curious resemblance between this present work and the well-known early Christian romance, the *Clementine Recognitions*. It is not possible here, and perhaps not desirable, at any length to work out a parallel between the two, especially in their philosophy of religion, their moral system, or in the ecclesiastical structure which is assumed in both. But in tone, in general atmosphere, there is much that cannot be explained simply as reproduction or dependence. The belief in the existence of magic and witchcraft, the employment of thaumaturgical forces, and the almost explicit acknowledgement of the superior and invincible magical powers possessed and practised by the Apostles, are in both equally prominent, and might be taken as a true reflection of the state of the society in which the early Church had to make its way. Recent investigations of primitive religions have shown, more clearly than before was realised, the potency and the persistency of magical beliefs in all cults throughout the world. In various guises, this fundamental superstition was probably the most unyielding of all the forms of error which the Church had to confront and confute.

The remarkable part played by magic in the following pages need not, therefore, be regarded as an argument against their probable authenticity. It is much more to be taken as an argument in their favour, for the natural tendency of any fabricator would have been the representation of the early years of the Church as a "golden age," free from any taint of superstition or chicanery.

This resemblance between the present scripts and early Christian "novels" of known authenticity is no less striking in the matter of form and *genre*. Cleophas makes a quite noticeable effort to be "literary" and lively. The reader is left to judge to what extent he achieves success, but he does incorporate much which looks to be almost intentionally romantic, or even sentimental. He is even just on the point more than once of introducing a little "feminine interest" to enliven the tale; he has passages of "fine writing," some really fine,¹ others perhaps overdrawn, and a good deal of diffused sentimentality. He loves character-drawing—the angry and discomfited Head Magistrate of Philippi (pp. 209–11 and 221–6) shows distinct humour—and he shows considerable skill in the management of dialogue. In the structure of the book, he has divided his narrative into sections with a distinct episodical unity, and the reader's interest—if the editors may judge from their own experience—is quite admirably sustained and carried forward.

In view of this, it is of interest to remember that the chosen medium of communication is herself a novelist, and, in fairness to the "Messenger," we must also remember his claim that he has to utilize the images of her mind as best he may, so that, it may be, his narrative necessarily assumes a form native to a mind stored with memories of novel-reading, and itself trained in that form of expression. It is notable, in this connection, that the narrative is of an almost uniform modernity of style, except for some archaic inversions and words such as might occur to anyone acquainted with the Authorised Version or a little Early English. In this edition these have, for the most part, been changed in accordance with modern usage. The form, then, of this singular narrative may—unconsciously—owe something to the personality through which the "Messenger" speaks.

But, in general, there is a close and interesting resemblance, almost amounting to a family likeness, between the present treatise and that whole body of apocryphal or pseudepigraphical pendants to the Old and the New Testament, to whose value attention has of late been drawn by the labours of Dr. Charles in England and Professor Kautzsch in Germany. No one would claim for this

¹ e.g. the first 1,750 words of Chapter i., Parchment III.

literature the importance attaching to the documents of canonical authority ; it is a source for the study of early Church history rather than of Christian doctrine. Based, in all probability, upon oral tradition, it illustrates the rapid popularisation and deterioration to which all oral communications are liable, but it does provide first-hand and important testimony to the condition of popular religion. If comparison were instituted between the scripts of Cleophas and that set of documents (or with any single member of the group), the parallel would in all probability be found striking and suggestive, and it would be well worth while to work it out in more detail than could be attempted here with, say, the books of Ezra, or some of the Gospels of Judæo-Christian or of Gnostic origin. Attention has already been directed to the prevalence in both of the miraculous element, for which, yet, there is the ready apology that Christianity itself was cradled in miracle, and that the best results of modern criticism leave the fact incontrovertible that miracles were wrought by Jesus Himself. But, in addition, there is the noticeable fact that in both groups the religious element, pure Judaism or pure Christianity, has been very largely tinged and penetrated by the prevailing world-philosophy. Those elements already mentioned as existing in these scripts—the distrust of pagan learning, the undercurrent of emotionalism, the occasional emergence of a cruder and more vindictive spirit—are common to the whole species of apocryphal writings, and are the inevitable product of that process which, on one side, was the leavening of the world by Christianity, and, on the other, the assimilation of Christianity to the world. Consideration of the *Scripts of Cleophas* has left the editors, as the study of the Apocrypha has left its devotees, confronted with the difficult problem of understanding what exactly is meant by inspiration, and yet convinced of the importance such documents as this possess, not so much for exhibiting what Christianity was in itself when pure and undefiled, as for revealing what Christianity was taken to be by its primitive exponents. The careful reader may be left, in the end, with a definite impression of a background of superstition, misinformed zeal, and ignorance which may well, the editors believe, have been precisely that in which the Apostles and their successors had to labour. The early converts, Church officials and teachers who figure in these pages certainly exhibit no excess of enlightenment in their grasp of Christianity ; they are often zealous with that zeal which is not too clearly to be distinguished from fanatical bigotry, but yet this is not the final and despondent impression left upon the mind. They do possess some germ of understanding, some

evidence of light, and if their treasure is in very earthen vessels, it is none the less a treasure.

In conclusion, the editors offer to the public this present portion of the chronicle in conscious disinterestedness ; they have no case to prove and no personal or unworthy motive in publication. In preparing the script for the Press they have, as has been before insisted upon, made no integral change or rearrangement ; in this short preface they have frankly placed the reader in possession of all the explanatory facts in their possession, and have not attempted to bias his mind towards one side or another. The problems raised by the book they realise to be considerably puzzling, but the editors have deliberately refrained from suggesting any theory or explanation. They hold that the work merits attention and examination, and they do not hesitate to invite the scrutiny of experts in early Christian history and literature, in the phenomena of thought-transference, or in communications from a higher plane. These and all kindred problems they leave such experts to decide, and hold that their task is discharged by placing the materials on widely accessible record.

21st December, 1927.

THE FIRST PARCHMENT

THE FIRST PARCHMENT

CHAPTER I

THE TRIAL OF PETER

I HAVE come to give you knowledge of that wondrous time that followed upon the rising of our Master. For a space the Brethren were sore afflicted and tormented in spirit. The pains of Hell beset them ; but each kept this to himself, and showed a cheerful countenance to the others.

It was a time when the Eleven held themselves apart for much wrestling with the pitiless demons that beset them sorely. The Brethren were bidden by the Master to give much time to prayer and meditation, so that all might be made ready within them for the holy coming.

There was temptation from without and from within.

Certain messengers from the Sanhedrin and from the High Priest came privily to the Disciples. Gold and many favours were offered them.

It was on this wise : Peter, James, and John lived together for a time, and met for the ordering of matters among the Brethren. The messengers sought them at even, and told them of the wrath of those in authority against them, if they continued to have the name of Christ upon their lips and sought to spread His teachings among the people.

The messenger spake of the favour of the High Priest, and of gold that would bring these three all they desired. Then Peter, listening to their words, bethought him of the last words of the Master : "Feed My sheep" ; and understood in that hour the meaning of that saying, which had seemed hard in the moment of its utterance. In truth the sheep would be scattered upon the hillside if these three shepherds drew themselves away from them.

Now, Peter was weak in matters of the flesh, and his heart had been failing as he hearkened to the words of the Priest's servant. Sore cast down had he been, bethinking him of those mortal pains

that might be his if he defied them, casting the words of the High Priest's servant in his teeth.

He sat apart from James and John in great heaviness of spirit. Seeing that his heart was failing him, the servant turned to him alone, speaking with honied words.

"Feed My sheep," echoed like a soft voice within the soul of Simon and, raising his head, he saw the Master's face as He looked upon him in the hour of his denial. It stayed but a moment, but it struck Peter to the ground. James and John, thinking he had fallen into a swoon, hastened to raise him up. He cast them from him, and, turning to the servant, told him to depart hence and torment them no more.

The servant would not go, and sought with menace to make Peter fail yet again. Now Peter was a choleric man, and anger rose within him, so that he could not stay his hand, and he cast forth the man from the room striking him upon the head, and calling on him in the name of the Lord to abjure the devils that were within himself.

James and John strove to stay his hand and his voice, which he lifted up in his wrath against the tempter. They feared that the people might be roused. But Peter suddenly turned, and passed from their presence, and from the presence of the servant.

They followed him, and found him in a dark chamber weeping and in sore travail of spirit. For he knew that in his anger he had once again failed his Master, and that was a reproach in the eyes of those whom he would teach and lead. He besought James and John to let him be but the servant of the Eleven; for he was not worthy to bear the teaching of the Christ to the Gentiles.

They took counsel together, and then John spake thus: "Man ever rends what he feareth most. As great as thy dread, brother, was thine anger against the servant of the High Priest. But thou hast conquered thy fear and shalt have forgiveness, and fail not again. We will hold our peace, and will not tell the Brethren of the sin of thine anger, nor shall they hear of the message from the High Priest, so that they may not be tempted beyond their strength."

Then Simon Peter vowed that no anger would stir him again, and he and the other two departed privily to a place not known to many, tarrying there for a short space, seeking by prayer to purge Peter of wrath, and to prepare themselves for the promise of the Master.

Some days before Pentecost they sought out the flock that was their charge. And, as they had been told, they made ready an upper chamber. Peter's spirit was greatly exalted because he had been

forgiven and not cast out. So his sin of anger begat the first great miracle of healing that was done by one of the Twelve. He healed the beggar who asked him for alms. You will read of it, for it was set down in Holy Writ.

The beggar was paralysed, and Peter told him to arise and walk. And lo! he walked, and went leaping before them into the Temple and praising God. Now, when you read of this miracle, you will know that it came from the repentance that followed upon the evil sin of wrath.

CHAPTER II

THE CHOICE OF THE TWELVE

THE Disciples witnessed the coming of the Holy Spirit in divers ways. Each related it according to the nature of his soul and spirit; for each of them was differently fashioned. For the company of the Twelve did make a pattern, each one being chosen for certain powers in which he differed from the others.

The Master knew that in the making of a ship there must be more than one wood, and that many parts must be chosen, so that the whole may have the balance that maketh it fit to go forth upon the waters. He chose the Twelve having in mind, not only those spiritual parts that give a sweet savour to the whole being, but thinking also of the form of this vessel that should in due time bear within it His teaching to the Gentiles.

John He chose for the pure flame of his spirit, the excellence of the glass within his soul, which could image the vision of the everlasting, and give to ignorant man the signs of the invisible, to instruct him with the learning of the Spirit.

James the Master chose for his worldly knowledge, for his cold judgement of man, and because he could devise means and ways whereby the Twelve and those that followed them could be guided in the ordering of their days and in their dealings with men.

Peter was chosen for the passion within his soul, for that hot temper that scorseth all that lieth in its path, making the way clear in a wilderness of thorns. He was chosen for his weakness, which, when sin hath been committed and repentance hath come at its heels, maketh a man of heat doubly strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus.

Andrew was called because he had a soul not easily stirred ; its movement was smooth as lake-water at even.

Philip was chosen for his learning and for his manner of weighing and balancing, which was the part in him most serviceable when counsel was being taken. He had no fear of strange lands, and had great knowledge and understanding of the nations, and was ready to bear the Word to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Bartholomew and Nathaniel are one and the same. Bartholomew was a name he bore when he was in Egypt, Nathaniel was the name by which the people in Judæa first knew him. He was quick in his ways and eager in his teaching and preaching. Oft cast down, he would yet rise again, seeking to make amends with much fervour.

Matthew was careful and slow, not given to much speaking, but watchful for the things of the Spirit. He never forgot, and was ever able to instruct the ignorant in small matters of doubt.

Thomas was stubborn as the ass is stubborn, and cared not to change his ways of thought or speech once they were set. He had the power of thinking in one manner, and an independence of soul that made him at a later day a leader, and one that naught could move from his faith in Christ Jesus.

James, the son of Alphæus, was of good heart, and had a kindly way of speech that won many who were weak. There was compassion in his soul. Yet he was by nature small and had no power to lead. He could but follow.

Simon the Canaanite was quick and lively in his parts, and could make answers that would crush the unbeliever. But there was no great depth in his soul, and he had perforce to draw often from the well of the Three for faith and wisdom. The Three were set apart from the Twelve so that they, with their deeper natures, should be as a fount of wisdom and understanding whence those who were athirst and fainting might draw the wine of the Spirit.

Thaddæus was the bearer of two names for the reason that at times there seemed to be two beings within his one body. There was a cleavage in his nature ; at one time he was circumspect and cold, ordering his comings and goings with judgement ; at another time he was wild and full of zeal, and so strangely wrought that there was no hardship he would fail to bear. He was chosen that he might preach at a later day to people of savage temper, who needed first the fire that maketh a great light and then the lasting warmth that lieth within the embers when the flame resteth and leapeth no more into the air.

Judge not Judas. Chosen was he for a strange purpose. When Christ first laid eyes upon him He knew that here was one who had

a fretful and uneasy soul that could bear no bridle for long upon it. This man had his hours of faith when he loved his Master, but with envy; and he was jealous of those around Him. He was chosen as one who through his own strong desires would betray the Master.

The betrayal had been appointed as a sign of man's lower nature and as a showing of what is but a semblance of love that walks abroad as such, while it is but the love of the Devil, which has no health in it.

In the life that follows death Judas did lie in darkness for what seemed to his soul an age of bitterness and weariness. But he repented, and passed, when his time was accomplished, to a state of spirit and soul wherein he cast from him those strong yearnings that had made of him a betrayer. He did not betray for the sake of the money; he betrayed because of the hate within his soul for the Master who had shown that others should be first with Him. Judas desired to be of the Three that were nigh the Master, and this was denied him.

CHAPTER III

THE CHOICE OF MATTHIAS

WHEN the Eleven were gathered together, though they had taken counsel of each other, they were not yet of the one mind. So they agreed to watch for a short space and hearken to whatever was set in their hearts.

The twelve had learned from the Master certain practices concerning the invocation of knowledge. He bound them to give these secrets to no man, so they have perished. I can but tell you that they gathered together, and in the midst of them was a table; the Brethren sat about it in silence, and for a space their hands were joined, and they prayed with their whole being for the light. After the loosing of the hands they made certain signs. Of these I may not speak but to say that they were for the freeing of the Body of Light from each of the Eleven. When all these spiritual bodies were set free they blended with one another, making what would seem to mortal eye a rounded pillar that was pure white and which passed into a mist above the heads of the watchers.

Thus they stayed for an hour or more, praying for guidance,

but making no stir with their mortal bodies. These were more still than are those of sleepers, for sleepers are tormented by dreams, wherein they move and mutter to themselves.

When a full hour had passed, then did these bodies of the Eleven stir once more ; and they trembled and quaked, as when the soul goes out of the body at death. This was the coming back of the Body of Light each to its vessel of clay. And, when the shaking of their bodies was ended, each of the Brethren drew breath within him heavily ; and thus were all the binding threads made fast once more. They severally arose and, one by one, passed out from the chamber without uttering a word.

John was the last to rise up and to go, for his Body of Light was a traveller, and sought to wander to and fro when it was freed from the darkness of the confining flesh. It was as hard to ensnare and to bring back to its harbourage as a butterfly that flutters in the sunshine. When John passed out he was dazed and spent ; and he sought, as did the other brethren, a lonely place where no man might trouble or fret any one of them. For some hours they were tender and sensitive in mind, and could easily have been hurt by the mind and body of another, if it drew close and cast its net about their body.

Now I have spoken concerning the watch before the choice was made. Ye have not told of this, for it was known only to a few who would guard the secret with care and discretion. No Gentile knew of this time of silence, when the Word was shaped within the hearts of the Eleven so that when they again assembled and chose Matthias they had the certainty in their minds that he was the man who should take the place of Judas Iscariot. The mind seeth, although the reason may be blind.

The Eleven knew and yet knew not that Matthias was the chosen one. They had little memory of the Hour of the Watch. The knowledge that is within you and is not known to you yet can be drawn from the Body of Light by means of certain tokens. Then it surely comes forth.

The name of the twelfth Disciple was given to the Eleven when they had cast from them the Body of Light ; yet it could not shape upon the fleshly part the name that was chosen. But it had the power to rule the casting of lots, by making the mind about them apprehend what was needful, and this mind did tell the fleshly part how it should act in this matter.

It was not the taking of counsel together or reasoning and talk between the Brethren, it was the Hour of the Watch that gathered this fruit and harvested it. The ignorant might say that it was

through the Spirit and its workings that this was accomplished. But I have sought to show you the way in which the Eleven drew unto them counsel concerning grave matters. Their natural understanding had no knowledge of the choice of the twelfth Disciple, for this choice was made, of a truth, through the Spirit ; but it was needful that the knowledge should be gathered through this mystery—the Communion of the Bodies of Light ; for there the Eleven were gathered within one another so that they made one ; and it was like a white rounded pillar, within which was set what they did yearn to know and possess.

CHAPTER IV

PENTECOST

I WOULD speak with you concerning the coming of the Holy Ghost, and how it did make of plain and ignorant men, whose souls were ever fearful, prophets without fear, bearing upon their lips the message of the Spirit.

On the eve of the Pentecost the Brethren drew apart ; and the Twelve strove to prepare themselves by seeking solitude and wrestling with the host of evil that assailed them. Not one of the Twelve was free from these strange troublings of the mind.

Dark shapes and images did gather about each brother, seeking to wrest from him the precious reward of faith. Only by the grace of faith and through the Spirit of our dear Lord Jesus could they rest as pure vessels that might receive the Holy Thought of God.

Many of them were sorely afflicted in those hours of darkness. Only John and Peter found their wrestling with the Accursed easy. For, since that last shaming of Peter, he was as a new man. His soul was like a flower that openeth in the dawn.

The night was long for the Disciples, yet not one of them failed in watching ; and the hosts of evil faded when morn had come. Then they went to an upper chamber after the purification of water, and thought on our Lord Christ the while they, for a short time, severally stood facing the sunrise and prayed, being now all purged of doubt and of one pure faith. They then sat themselves in silence about the holy table, encircling it as it had been commanded and according to the order at the Last Supper.

This was for remembrance. They would draw nigh to them the elements invisible, that would give them power to receive and to bear what would have stricken ordinary men with death. For this great gift of the spirit consumes, and every man must be fortified for its coming, else will he be shrivelled up and for ever cast out of the body.

One seat was empty, and thus the circle was open. After a time of silent prayer, and after they had shared in the Holy Mystery, they did join hands; waiting in sure hope and belief that the Master's Word would be accomplished.

Strange and sudden was the coming. The room had been dim and misty, and what had the semblance of a vapour did hang about them. It vanished, and a light broke; and, with the light, a roaring arose, of great winds that swirled and rushed about them like the loud crying of the sea torn with tempest. Out of the light came tongues of flame; like the red blooms of flowers, they were glowing upon the head of each Disciple. And their very beings were shaken with wonder; but no fear was among them.

Some saw these blooms as the whiteness of the lilies of the field; others as the redness of the Master's blood. White is the sign of purity and red the sign of redemption.

And the Twelve—for they were Twelve—did, in one moment, see before their eyes the scroll of the invisible, and the writings of the future time when all the Gentiles should have had word of the Master Christ. It passed with a strange swiftness, and some had no knowledge of it after its passing and yet their spirits knew; and they were filled with a wondrous joy.

And, as they watched, the blooms of fire soared up, and they felt within them the rushing of strange words, and speech that had in past times no meaning for them was now clear as the noonday light.

The winds had ceased: the tongues of fire were to the Twelve no more within sight, and a great stillness came upon all within that chamber. Yet within each one was the mightiest stirring that has ever been known within the soul of man.

It was Peter who first broke the silence. Rising up, he spoke aloud in words of prophecy. He would tell of the writing on the scroll. But first he spoke the words of the Prophet Joel, and of their tidings for the Gentiles and those that knew not God. Ye know the words:

“Your young men shall see visions and the old shall dream dreams; and many signs and wonders will there be.

“The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall be as the colour of blood.”

This was a true saying of a time that did follow upon the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Yet shall these signs and wonders be given in a later day, and strange happenings will be in the heavens. But not a hair of your head will be touched. I know not the hour of their coming; but with them will there be a spreading anew of the fire of the Spirit, and many dreams and visions will in that time be given to those that be channels for the image and the signs of the Invisible, and show the wondrous works of the Lord God of Israel.

Watch for that day, which is not the Second Coming, but the Promised Light, that shall be to the Gentiles as was the Promised Land to the Seed of Abraham. Then will the Gentiles bathe themselves again in the waters of the Spirit; and the darkness which covers men's souls, so that they think but of their bodies and their little day of life, will pass from them, and they will know that, as the worm dieth not, neither shall man, nor shall the fire of the Spirit be quenched.

I would write of Peter, and how, in that holy hour, he spoke before all the others in the words that he had seen upon this scroll of life and death for man. Of the number of his generations, of his many wars, and of his backslidings—of all these did Peter speak, and he told also of the Spirit of Christ that should rest in the hearts of men in good days and evil, turning them, with the passing of each score of years, ever a little more from the night and ever a little nearer to the day.

He spoke also of great evil that would be done by Satan in the name of Christ, and revealed to the Brethren that, if they would share all with one another, this evil would not be of their time. He told them that the Word of the Spirit was that no one should have greater possessions than the other; that there should be a common treasury; and that each of the Twelve should, at his appointed time, go forth according to the bidding of the Spirit within him, to whatever land was given unto his charge.

But, first, they should abide near Jerusalem, for many people were gathered together at that time within its boundaries from the ends of the earth; and these, that were but passers-by or as the birds, would help to bear the seed of the Word to the people that lay in darkness. And, so, some one of each nation, would be as a messenger to his own people.

When those that were about Jerusalem had learned these tidings

of the Master Christ, then would the Brethren know better their own great powers, and watch for the signs that would be given them as to their work among the Gentiles in far distant lands. Peter spoke in wondrous words, praising God. And all the brethren joined in that praise and song, and great was their amazement and their joy at the wondrous coming of the winds of God, and at the entering within them of the breath of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER V

THE MIRACLES OF PETER

I WOULD speak of the great power that arose within Peter after his last failing, for he was nigh to the fall of Judas when the servant of the High Priest spake him fair. But, out of the soil of weakness such as his, springs a growth that is sturdy and stubborn.

His repentance was great and his power to draw the Spirit to him increased. It flooded his being as it flooded no other on the day of Pentecost, and he it was that first found speech.

When the coming of the Holy Spirit was accomplished, when all were filled with it, they arose with one accord and sought the multitudes that had come from all parts to Jerusalem for buying and selling and for the festival. There were many in that small nation that had come hither to seek livelihood among the great peoples of the earth, many of whom at that time came to see their kindred from far places. That was why the coming of the Holy Spirit was chosen for that hour.

For years there had not been such a great assemblage of Jews of divers nations; yet of the one stock, the one blood.

To all the Twelve spoke in their own tongues, and these were amazed that ignorant men should have this knowledge. There were many who were not of Judæa and who had come to Jerusalem for that chosen time. These also heard the Word of the Lord spoken in their own tongues, and marvelled. Of each nation ever a few followed the Master only from that hour, and these did severally entreat the Twelve that one of their number should bear the knowledge of the Prince of Life to their own people. And so the seed was scattered in a few days over many fields, and the Word of the Lord was thus accomplished.

Now Peter, knowing that Jerusalem was crowded with those that came from the uttermost parts of the earth, prayed to the Lord God that a miracle should be wrought through him. And, filled with a new strength—the power of the humbled—he did heal a lame man at the Gate Beautiful.

Walking towards it, he had spied the servant of the High Priest. So mighty was the anger of righteousness within him that the hearts of those standing by quaked at the sternness of his countenance; and the servant of the High Priest, who had come to gibe at him, was stricken to the ground by his fear and lay there as in a swoon.

It had been in his mind to summon those that would forbid the entry of Peter to the Temple. But all strength went from him when he found himself in the presence of the Holy Spirit; for it was passing through the earthly vessel that was Peter, giving out healing to the lame man, and withering up the evil in the soul of the servant of the High Priest.

There was great talk throughout the town at this marvel, yet it was but the first of many miracles. Peter was for seven days possessed with that fury of righteousness that led him to heal many that were in a fever and give sight to those that were blind from their mother's womb.

This time of healing was a time more plenteous in cures than at any other season in the life of Peter or in the lives of the Twelve. It was because the Twelve, being all assembled in the one place, were mighty in power. Their speech was such that the faith of the people about them was mightily increased. Never was there greater faith among the humble and those of simple mind. Thus it was that Peter healed many sores; even his shadow gave strength to the sick and hope to those that were nigh to death. Therefore the days that follow the Feast of Pentecost are called the days of healing.

There was a purpose in this great curing of bodies. The Priests and the Sadducees had held counsel together, and, in the days following Pentecost, they desired to shut the mouths of these followers of the Master by taking them in custody and keeping them in prison, till the people were scattered once more. So would the seed not have been scattered over many fields if Peter had not of a sudden risen up in the midst of the people and cured those who were sick and dying.

The account of the time after the rising of the Master was written, but this chronicle hath perished.

I would have you know why Peter, who had sinned, should have been chosen in the later days, as the holiest among those that were

holy, as the one who had from the Master the charge of the Church. It was by reason of the wrath of the soul that was in him, so that there was, as it were, a great burning in his being which gave out the power of healing. This in a time of sickness was given as a sign to men, so that the High Priest and the Sadducees dared not, while the multitudes of strangers were in Jerusalem, lay hand on the Disciples and put them in prison, for bloodshed and tumult would have followed.

The priests bided their time, and, when the stranger had gone from their gates, they had Peter brought before them, and many were the charges against him. But then the seed was sown and naught could uproot it.

CHAPTER VI

PETER CONFOUNDS THE HIGH PRIEST AND PERFORMS A MIRACLE

I WILL give you tidings of the works of the Twelve, and how it was that a great tree sprang from their teachings and gave shade to the whole earth.

I would tell you of the first miracle, and how the High Priest and the Captain of the Temple communed with one another, saying : " If there be more miracles, then shall we be undone."

So Peter was sought for, and, when they found him, they dared not treat him as a malefactor, but desired of him that he would bide the night in a place nigh to the Temple, a dwelling-house of the High Priest's.

Now the High Priest was a man of much learning, but one that had no grace of the Spirit. All the days of his life he had been tormented by the desire to work miracles and heal the sick.

He was called Annas, and Hanan was one name that he was known by.

The Captain of the Temple feared the power that the teaching of the Master Christ would have over the people. But the High Priest coveted the glory that he knew would come to this unlearned man if he continued in his curing of men's bodies.

So in the night-time he spoke privily with Peter, saying that there was much that he, an ignorant man, might learn in the Temple, and how his knowledge would be greatly increased if he would study therein and become one of the Sanhedrin. And he promised

Peter gifts, and aught that he might desire, if he would but tell the secret of the miracle of healing.

“It was through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and through no power of mine,” was Peter’s answer. “I am but a humble sinner whom the Lord hath chosen for His vessel, as He chooseth the hollow of a rock and maketh therein a pool from which those who are thirsty and fainting in spirit may drink and draw the power of life.”

The High Priest did not believe him, and mocked at his words, saying: “Thou hast some secret power learned from the hermits or the Egyptians; the power that cometh from the stroke of thy hands or from the drawing of a healing vapour out of the air. This is no miracle of thine; it is but a secret stolen from some wise man.”

But Peter held his peace.

Then Hanan upbraided him and struck him in the face, buffeted him and spat upon him. But Peter was not troubled, but was calm and still. Through all the hours of the night Hanan raged and pleaded with him, praying that he would give up the secret of the healing to one who was wise and would know how to make use of it.

When daybreak had come the angry High Priest thought that the Council of the Elders would put the fear of death into the heart of Peter, and that then he would surrender his secret to him.

So Peter, who was now the chief of the Apostles, was brought before these old men—strong in authority, and, by reason of their cunning speech and baleful looks, greatly to be feared by all who were brought into their presence to answer for their deeds.

Peter would not be questioned or silenced by them. The grace of the Spirit filled him, and he spake concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and the manner of His Rising from the Dead. And, though the Elders sought to stay him, he would not cease from speaking, and he showed them that he, who was but an ignorant man, had knowledge of the inner mysteries of the Temple.

“These,” said Peter, “will I give to the people, and all shall know of them if ye will but let me go, so that I may spread the light of our Lord Christ among men.”

Now, when they sought to gag Peter and have him removed to prison, a great clamour arose outside, and entrance was made for the daughter of a Roman who had authority at that time in Jerusalem.

She was stretched upon a couch, and, though young in years, her limbs were wasted so that there was no strength or health in her, and she could not set her feet upon the ground.

And the Elders, who did not believe in the healing of the lame

man, made mock of Peter, saying: "Heal this woman, so that thou mayst prove to us that thou hast this grace within thee of which thou pratest." But the High Priest gave orders that Peter should be put in ward.

After much discussion, they cast lots on this matter. Those who believed that Peter would fail had their way, and he was forthwith led to the couch of the maiden, which stood in the hall without.

Peter, taking both her hands in his, searched her countenance with his eyes. And she, having faith, did not falter, but gave him gaze for gaze, saying: "Master, I know that if it be thy will thou wilt make me whole." All the Elders had crowded into the hall and were about him, waiting to see him discomfited and confounded. They were sore at the manner in which he had preached to them—as if they were the least of men.

A great hush fell, and of a sudden the maiden's body, that had been stiff and without life, stirred, and was shaken with violence, as if a spirit possessed it.

She gave a great cry, rose from her couch, and threw herself at the feet of Peter, saying: "Master, I am whole!"

Then Peter took her hands once more in his, and raised her from the ground, saying: "Maiden, it is not meet that thou shouldst worship a man who is but a sinner. Worship the Lord Christ, the Prince of Life, and give Him faithful service; for He hath healed thee, not I."

And the Elders were dumbfounded, and, fearing the anger of the Gentiles, withdrew themselves, saying naught of what had lain in their hearts and what had been prepared by them for the undoing of Peter.

The maiden would have led him to her Father's house, but Peter would not go with her and her servants.

"My people have need of me," said he. And a multitude gathered to greet him, for the tidings of this new miracle had travelled with the swiftness of a bird among them. And on that day Peter was able to speak with many concerning our Lord Jesus and His teachings.

When Peter had thus triumphed over the Elders, and had silenced them with the healing of the Roman maid, they were afraid of the multitude; for they needed the authority of the people to condemn Peter. Men were saying that here was a prophet come unto Judæa who was greater than those that had gone before, because he had healed two who were sore afflicted; and this the Elders could not deny, for they had examined the man who had been lame from his mother's womb.

So, at that hour, when the heat of the day on which the maid had been healed was strongest, and there was quiet, because the multitude had retired within doors, the elders spoke with Peter, James, and John, and charged them to cease speaking of one who had been a malefactor, for it would lead to commotion and violence, and in the end to their own death.

The three Disciples answered saying: "We have no power in this matter. We are but the vessels that hold the message of the Holy Spirit, and from us it must be scattered abroad among a thirsty people."

And they went hence, leaving these learned men sore perplexed, and, being anxious at heart, sought out the company of the Brethren so that they might gain virtue and strength in the common act of prayer.

It was an hour of high import, for the little ship of the Church was still but a frail barque, and they knew not how potent had been the two miracles of healing wrought by Peter.

As they prayed they yearned greatly for a sign that would set their minds at ease and give them new faith. And again in the hush came a rushing of wind, and this time the earth was shaken, and one among them saw fire and the face of the Master Christ below the flame. Then Peter and the Disciple whom Jesus loved knew that all was well with the Brethren, and that they were travelling the road that had been chosen for them.

CHAPTER VII

THE STORY OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

Now I would speak concerning the meaning that lies behind the tale that hath been told concerning Ananias. Much of it was not written, for it was not deemed needful for those that came after.

The Twelve had been taught by the Master that they should share all things in common. To some of them this seemed a hard rule, and caused some murmuring. So Peter called together the whole community. Everyone that had been baptised was present; and he spoke concerning the laws by which they should be bound, and how they, being one in Christ Jesus, should share all things in common.

Now Ananias, who had murmured most, was called upon to speak and asked if he had aught to say concerning this law. But he was confounded, and replied only that the will of the Brethren was his will.

Peter answered, "There be no will but that of Christ in this matter." So Ananias, with honied words, urged those about him to share all with one another, for Peter was mighty in speech and Ananias was a coward.

And so it was settled, and everyone brought their possessions and their store of silver to the Twelve, and it was given to certain of the younger men to apportion to each his share daily. The tidings of this sharing was spread abroad among the people. Some did mock, but many observed that the community neither hungered nor thirsted, and that none went untended. And it was given out by certain evil-minded persons that they prospered greatly and lived in ease.

Ananias, who was bitter because of his overthrow by Peter, and because his turn had come for the selling of his land, which was rich and gave him money in plenty, sought out certain men among the Senate of Israel, men that were in authority, and said: "I will acquaint you with the rule of this new sect, and how they seek to overthrow the State by taking from a man the wealth that he hath earned or that his father earned for him. There is conspiracy here. These men do but use the name of Christ to shield their purpose, which is the overthrow of all law and authority, the giving to beggars and thieves of the money of the merchants."

Then these men, who had great possessions, were disturbed in mind, and, having taken counsel with one another, they told Ananias they would look into this matter; but they did not give him what he sought, which was payment for these tidings.

Now he fell into a great sweat of fear, for he had been much among the Brethren, ever loud in speech and boastful of what he would do for his Lord. So he was well known and could not easily withdraw himself.

But, thinking that certain of the weaker Brethren would follow him, and as he had a lust after power and greatly desired to be known as a prophet, he sowed the seed of discontent in their hearts, and planned with them to raise insurrection, and by loud speaking and violence to overthrow Peter when all were assembled in council.

Set about with his following, he went to the chamber in which they were gathered together, and thus he had the courage to face Peter, who was the last to come in. All had awaited his coming,

for he was ever first in counsel and wise in speech, seeking to read the truth as given him by our blessed Master.

He knew that Ananias had spoken with those in authority, and that he was therefore more than a liar; he was as the snake that lieth in the grass, and there was naught but poison in him.

When certain of the elder Brethren had brought in their share to the common store and a muttering had started amongst those about Ananias, Peter called out in a loud voice: "Ananias, come forth and give in thy share to the common store."

He made answer that his mite was small, yet he gave it gladly and, if he had it, gladly would he give more to the common store. For he was cowed, and feared to speak out boldly. The eye of Peter withered up his courage, and he hung his head as he came and stood in the midst of them.

James and John were next to Peter, but they knew naught of the evil in this man's heart. It was through the Spirit only that Peter had learnt of the betrayal and knew that there was canker in this branch, and that it would rot the whole tree if it was not cut off and cast out for burning. The wrath of the Spirit possessed him, for was he not the shepherd of the flock? Among them was a wolf that would devour all. It was not the lie, but what was hidden behind it, that stirred up within Peter that fury of righteousness that had healed and now could kill.

About Ananias there gathered a cold, chill air that wound itself around him like grave-clothes. So close did it become that he was choked, and on the instant died.

The muttering ceased. All were terrified. Peter had but charged Ananias with lying concerning the moneys he had brought with him. The weaker Brethren knew of his evil counsel and of their own covetous thoughts, so they said nothing, and Peter spoke concerning the law of sharing one with another, and that it would bring Heaven to earth if all men practised it; that its practice would mean the slaying of much that was evil; so it was needful that Ananias should die and the Kingdom of Heaven prevail.

Now Sapphira was a beautiful woman who loved all that was rare and costly; at first she had tempted her husband, saying that her love for him would wax cold if he gave all to the common store, keeping back nothing for her.

And Peter was instructed by the Spirit that through the temptation of her beauty she had been the first to draw Ananias away from the strait path; and he knew also that she had much power,

by reason of her speech and her beauty, with the weaker Brethren ; that she was a poison among them and must also be destroyed.

She came, hoping to see Ananias the leader and the chosen among the people, and to share his triumph. Seeing Peter, she was confounded, and his words smote her as the slayer smiteth, and she was, like her husband, struck down in the midst of them.

The young men carried out the beautiful Sapphira, and she shared the grave of the betrayer and the one she had betrayed.

In the early Church much did hang upon this story, for it showed to the Brethren, even more than the miracles of healing, that Peter was the shepherd whom the Master Christ, in His stead, had chosen for His flock.

Now the death of Ananias was voiced abroad ; it silenced the slanderers, and made the Rulers of the People careful and watchful. Daily more of the people were gathered within the fold. But the ordering of moneys and the sharing of them among the Christians first roused those that were in authority—I mean those that had to do with the ruling of the people. It was not the fears of a new prophet that stirred them, as it did the Scribes and Elders, nor his strange teaching, that threatened to overthrow the rule of the Priests within the Temple.

Before the Pentecost, before Peter had become known as the prophet and the healer among the people, the Priests and the Elders of the Temple had been at variance with the Rulers and those in authority.

Then the Captain of the Temple had been afraid to seize the Disciples. The people would not have been with him in such a deed, they having been mightily stirred by the signs and wonders wrought by the Disciples.

Many men of other nations were dwelling in Jerusalem and round about in those days. The High Priest, Hanan, learnt of the displeasure of these men, who had much to lose if the State were overthrown, and he sought them out, for he hated Peter, who had the power of healing which was denied to him.

The Rulers and merchants and the Elders were gathered together by Hanan in secret council, and were all apprised of the threatened revolt and uprising that would come from a body of men who shared all things in common, and who in time would seek also the possessions of those in high places.

These men took no thought of the teaching of Christ concerning brotherly love, or they held that to be a veil to hide the evil conspiracies of the Disciples against the civil order.

So the Jews in authority became as one in their wish to destroy

this new sect of the Christians. The people favoured Peter because of the many miracles wrought by him ; great strength must be shown by those who desired his undoing. This could only be obtained by holding the Senate of Israel, in which all the Ancients, the Elders, and the Rulers would gather together and sit in judgment upon Peter : this would be greater than a Sanhedrin because of the power of the Gentiles behind it.

Now they felt strong enough to put Peter and the Disciples in public ward, and, on the morrow of their taking, to bring them before the Senate to be condemned, for their condemnation was certain.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARREST OF THE DISCIPLES

AFTER the death of Sapphira and Ananias a great fear fell upon the Brethren. Many more believed and magnified the Lord, but were afraid to join the Brethren and be baptised, for then would they be subject to the ruling of that community.

Some were weak in the flesh, and said unto themselves, " This ruling is hard. If we fail we shall be stricken by this prophet, and become as dead men, and our souls will be damned."

They knew but of the lies that had been told to Peter concerning the property that was withheld ; they did not know of the secret betrayal by Ananias to the High Priest of the Brethren ; nor did they know that he sought to destroy the Church when it was frail. Peter had learnt of these matters through his power of insight which is from within.

John was a learned man, and had a knowledge of the schools, and this knowledge led him into confusion. This John of whom I speak was not John the Elder or John the Dreamer, but John of the Schools. All three were saints, and there was much confusion at a later time because they bore the one name. Many of the happenings in the life of John the Dreamer were set down upon the rolls in the name of John the Elder or in the name of John of the Schools. Now this John of the Schools and certain of the Disciples sought out Peter, saying : " This that thou hast done is an ill thing and much harm will come of it. Thou hast brought fear upon those that might have been of our company. Fear, akin to despair, is a deadly sin, brother."

And John continued, saying: "Many miracles were wrought by our Master Christ. They were for healing only and for the casting out of unclean spirits. They were miracles that aroused faith, not fear. What hast thou to say concerning the slaying of Ananias and Sapphira?"

Peter was not confounded, yet he knew that if he could not satisfy them another must lead, another must be Shepherd of the Flock.

He made answer: "Yea, the anger of the Spirit rose up within me, and I summoned it with intent to blast these two sinners, for they had sought privily to destroy the community of Christ and to make our preaching and our work of no avail among the multitudes. In blasting these two I have but followed the teaching of the Master, when He spake concerning the whole body, 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, for it were better that it should perish than that thy whole body should be thrown into Hell.'"

And John bowed his head and asked for forgiveness of Peter for his doubt of him. John had in this matter been guided by the knowledge of men and not by the knowledge of God.

Yet there is danger in the reading of the words, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out." The judge of the sin must have the knowledge of the truth, or, peradventure, he will pluck out what hath health and hath not been corrupted.

Now concerning the gathering together of those in authority. I have told how old quarrels were healed, and how the Rulers of the People, the merchants, and those that were counted as the Elders in Judæa, had held counsel with the High Priest, and how they agreed that the followers of Jesus Christ were a danger to the State and to the faith and the old beliefs.

Many of the people worshipped Peter because of the miracles of healing, and many would have died for the Twelve because of the message they taught in the Temple and because of the fire of the Holy Spirit that burned within them. They taught daily in the Temple, in the hall without, where all may come and speak and where the High Priest hath no power.

The Disciples made it their rule to meet in prayer at sunset. When it was possible, all the doors were shut, and only those that had been with the Master prayed within and spake of Him at that hour, so that He might remain fresh within their hearts.

The multitude withdrew at this hour of prayer and communion; and so it was an easy matter for the soldiers to come in upon them; to burst open the doors, and, threatening them with spears, to drive the Twelve to the place of keeping.

Once they were lodged within the prison, the Captain sought out the High Priest and the Rulers, and gave them word that not one of those that had made sedition and disturbance had escaped him; and there was great rejoicing among these Ancients; for now they were powerful and of one mind. They were decided upon one issue—that they would condemn, not upon the matter of faith, but upon the ordering of the community, which they would say was a conspiracy for the destruction of the State.

CHAPTER IX

THE DISCIPLES ARE DELIVERED FROM PRISON

PETER and the Disciples were cast into a narrow dungeon, foul and dim, and made in such a fashion that no man might of his own strength break through the doors. The Disciples were cast down, and in their need they prayed, with Peter leading the prayer. He bade them be silent, and drew apart, calling upon the Holy Spirit to enter the temple of his body and so work upon it that power would be given him to open the doors.

Now I have spoken concerning the Body of Light, and that there is nigh to it another shape, which is between the visible and the invisible, which covereth the flesh and which is between it and the Body of Light. These two Peter cast forth from him, and his own mortal body fell into a swoon. He lay so still that some believed him dead, yet they dared not draw nigh to him, because he had commanded that they should be still, and watch and pray in silence.

There are greater spirits that have powers that would seem to you marvellous if they had but a shape within which they might enter and manifest themselves. But only those that be mighty of soul may cast the Body of Light from them and its covering, as Peter did, so that the Higher Spirit might enter within it and manifest its power.

Now as the Disciples prayed, they did, with the power of their evocation, help to give the earthly element that would draw the angel within the manifest shape of which I spoke. And lo! it appeared, as light cometh, and was of the substance of light in the eyes of the watchers, and yet it had the form of man, that being the form which Peter had cast from his mortal body.

Then, drawing from the Brethren what it needed, the angel opened the doors of the prison and set the seal of sleep upon the guards, so that they stirred not, standing in their places deep in slumber.

The Disciples did not move when the doors were opened, for they had given their promise to Peter to remain still, and would not break this, even with the temptation of liberty spread before them.

So soon as all that was needful was accomplished, the angel vanished from their sight. A coldness struck them, and they trembled, for they were in the presence of the Holiest of Holies. It passed as swiftly as the flight of a bird. Peter rose up and commanded the Brethren to follow him, and they went forth, past the sleeping guards, and beneath the gateway of the prison-house, out into the open country, as the day was breaking.

Peter was greatly shaken, for mighty was the miracle he had wrought ; yet his will was firm and he led all of them to the Temple, at the time when the people were gathering there, bringing offerings and prayers or meeting for idle talk at that cool hour.

Those who were assembled there were greatly amazed, and gathered about the Twelve, demanding tidings of them. Then Peter and three others that were chosen lifted up their voices, preaching the Word of the Lord, speaking of His message and His teaching.

CHAPTER X

JAMES EXPOUNDS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TO THE ASSEMBLY

WHEN the day was fully come, all the Elders, the merchants, the Priests, and those in authority, gathered together, prepared with weighty words and arguments to confound these ignorant men.

The merchants gave little thought to the matter of doctrine ; they felt that the preaching of the Disciples concerning the Messiah was a disguise to plot against those who had many possessions. The Priests and certain of the Elders were afraid, not for the faith of their fathers, but for their own authority with the people.

“Whereunto will this grow?” they asked of one another. “These men would be Priests in our stead, and hold the people’s minds with their vain talk concerning this malefactor, and with the cunning secrets they have stolen from the old Egyptians ; from a tomb in Egypt have they stolen the secret of healing, which was

written upon a scroll and lay beneath the head of a Pharaoh who reigned in the day of Moses. The secret of the working of miracles was known at that time to a few amongst the Egyptians, and from them Moses drew that knowledge, to which was added the mighty power that was given by the Lord God of Israel. But these men seek to commune with evil spirits, and with their aid and this knowledge have they wrought miracles." Such were the tales that were told by those who sat in council awaiting the coming of the Disciples.

The officers hied them to the prison and found the guard at their posts; all these being chosen men, they were assured that the Disciples were fast within.

"No man hath passed this way since the setting of the sun. We have watched all night and there was naught but stillness and silence about us."

Hearing these words, the Captain of the Temple rejoiced in his heart, for he had feared a miracle; but he trusted the word of these men. Never had they failed in their duties. He entered within the prison, and lo! it was as empty and solitary as the desert. No sign was there of any man.

The guards were put in ward and others called to hold them fast. The Captain was possessed with a great anger, and he would not listen to the words of the guards, who were amazed, for they did in truth believe that they had watched all night, and all denied that they had slept even for a moment.

When the High Priest was told that the Disciples were no longer in hold, but were within the court of the Temple, preaching the Word of God and speaking of the wonder of their deliverance through the might of the Holy Spirit, there was much talk, and these ancient men were troubled at heart, and sent the Captain and the officers to the Temple.

On their approach there was a great disturbance among the multitude, who were of many nations, assembled about the Disciples. They threatened these servants of the Elders, saying: "We will stone you if ye lay hands upon these holy men."

A great clamour arose. Then Peter, James, and John raised their hands, making a signal for silence, and the multitude was obedient. A great hush fell upon it. Peter demanded of the Captain the nature of his business with them. He bowed to the ground in answer, and, with civil words, entreated him and the Brethren to speak of their doctrine before the company of the Elders; for they would gladly hear more of the Christ who was called the Messiah.

Peter read the guile that lay in his heart, and made answer that he and the Disciples would go before the Elders if promise was given that those in authority would hearken to their words. And, the Captain having sworn that this would be so, they hied them to the place of assembly, where sat the Elders of Israel.

Once the Brethren were within, the doors were fast shut, and they were told that certain charges would first be made against them, which they would be called upon to answer, and that afterwards judgment would be given.

“The people will give you judgment,” replied James. “Hearken to them.” And on that instant a great shout arose from without, and there was menace in it; for the multitude that had pressed upon the heels of the officers had found the doors closed fast against them.

Before the High Priest arose and spoke concerning the Disciples and their doings, a lawyer made accusation, setting forth in hard words the several charges against them.

These were: that they sought privily to conspire against the State; that one Ananias, who had been of their counsel, had given testimony against them that it was their design to take from the rich men their possessions, to rob all those who were traders of their merchandise, and to take from the Treasury such store of good as it contained.

This would they share with each other, giving to beggars and thieves such alms as would lead them to make disturbance and insurrection, and thus would the civil authority be overthrown.

Now James was the one among the Twelve that had cunning for these hard words of the law and could read their riddles set as snares for the unwary. So he rose up and asked, whether this man Ananias had given them written testimony of the charge that they were minded to seize all men’s possessions and share them with one another?

The lawyer answered that this man had but spoken of these things, and that there was no written testimony.

Then James, turning to the High Priest, said: “Call this man from Sheol,¹ that he may render testimony concerning these charges.”

The lawyer, speaking for Hanan, said: “You slew this man.”

“His own lying killed him,” was the answer. “And take heed lest you, by a slip of the tongue, be led to take the road he hath followed.”

At which the lawyer trembled, fearing the might of this holy man, and made no answer, sitting as one who had been struck

¹ Sheol: the Jewish hereafter.

dumb, making only foolish signs of fear with his hands, and showing in his countenance his discomfiture.

Then James spoke in full freedom, for all were amazed at the silencing of one who was accounted the most cunning in words in all Israel.

“Call Ananias from the dead if thou art in truth the mouthpiece of the Lord God of Israel,” cried James, addressing himself once more to the High Priest. But he also was seized with that fear that held all who were seated in the place of assembly and held his peace.

And James did teach them then concerning the ordering of possessions among the Brethren. He told of the words of our Lord Christ, and how all should share all things one with another. Yet Jesus had not meant that this should be the rule of the State, for His words were: “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”

“Men of Israel,” said James, “I would have you know that those among you who seek to share all things with one another and have not the Spirit of the Holy Ghost within them, nor the teaching of Christ Jesus within their hearts, will come to nought, and all their planning for a rightful division of possessions will be in vain.

“For do you not see that, if the people desire the things of this world and all that the eye lusteth after, and have not the Spirit of Truth within them, there will be naught but confusion and folly if they would, in the ordering of possessions, have all things in common?

“The Church of Christ should be an image of the Kingdom of Heaven, and this is the inner meaning of the teaching of the Prince of Life. He would have us set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, so that the joy of the Spirit should reign within the hearts of all men. Man, being subject to his body, must take thought to make the form of the life that is outward so perfect that it becomes an image of the spirit in its beauty and truth.

“Let there be a State, and let all men obey its laws. But let all men gather together and hearken to the teachings of those who have the knowledge of Christ within them, and then, when they are filled with the Spirit of Truth, let them form themselves into Brotherhoods, and let those within the Brotherhood share alike and have a common treasury. Thus will all have ease of mind, and those with a special gift for the work of the Lord will be set free from care.

“Those that gather together in brotherhood must be subject to the ruling of Christ, and must know charity, and seek to help the

saints within the order and among the Brethren by love, as well as by the sharing of goods with one another. There may be many Brotherhoods within one State, and they shall, if this be so, deal with one another according to the civil authority, seeking the common good. Each Brotherhood shall have its own treasury and its own officers. But in that which pertains to the teaching of Christ they shall be of one accord.

“ These Brotherhoods shall not lay a yoke upon those that would not be of them. Every man and woman must enter of his own free will into the Church, whose first rule is to divide all things equally among the Brethren. There shall be division, also in work as in all things, and the saints who are wise in spirit must seek to order all matters so that there be no envy or jealousy, but so that the sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus share His Kingdom of Heaven upon earth in great peace and happiness. The only true rule for man is that he shall rise above the beasts of the field and live the truth of the Spirit of Christ Jesus.”

Such was the substance of the speech of James. He made clear to the mind of his hearers that above all things the State must not be confounded with the Brotherhoods or Churches within it. The State is for the safeguarding of the whole people and for the ordering of all those matters that demand one common will and mind.

But the Church is for the inward life and must be the image of the Kingdom of Heaven. The image cannot, save with a few, be within if it have no outward shape.

Thus did James show that there was no conspiracy against the State, and that the ordering of the Church of Christ would but give strength to the State. For all the Brethren within the Church were content with their lot, and prepared to render tribute to Cæsar and abide by the common law.

CHAPTER XI

THE INTERVENTION OF THE SOPHIST GAMALIEL

GAMALIEL was a just and upright man who had lived among the Greeks and had been taught to reason in their manner, which is that reason must ever be set apart from feeling or passion, and that, if a man sets out to be a reasoner, he must ever set his own feelings and his fortune upon one side, seeking to gain the truth by not letting self stand in the way to obstruct the truth.

He had been greatly disturbed by the common report of the new polity the followers of Jesus would set up in Judæa. It seemed to him, not a polity, but the congregating together of robbers for the purpose of making the possessions of all men their own.

He had listened earnestly to James; and his countenance lightened greatly when he learned that it was peace and the goodwill of Brotherhoods that James expounded, and that a man was free to choose as he wished in the new order preached by "the man Jesus," as He was called by the Pharisees.

Great was the joy of the learned doctor as James continued to speak of the Brotherhoods, and showed that they were not against the State, but for the State; and that they were frugal in their living, seeking but the good of the whole.

They would, he thought, bear the methods of Greek philosophy, its order and sequence, into the common life of ignorant men. "They are high thinkers, and we should not judge them, but welcome them to our midst," Gamaliel whispered in the ear of the High Priest. And Hanan, who had been stricken by the fear of Peter's deadly power, was stirred again to anger, which is the child of fear, by the words of this wise Pharisee, who was held in high honour, and from whom he hoped to win a condemnation of the Brethren.

"You have no knowledge of their evil teachings, nor of the lies they have told concerning the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem!" Hanan whispered in answer. And then he rose, saying in a loud voice: "I have charges to make of which the Elders know naught; and these charges are such that ye can make no answer to them.

"A man called Jesus did preach among the people, drawing men from their work; setting them against the laws of Moses; telling them He was the Messiah, the Son of God. He was but a common fellow, and for the sake of peace our Governor took Him; and He was put to death for the evil He had wrought.

"And you, O ignorant men! who would seek our hurt, spread abroad the tidings of His death, and called us of the Sandedrin 'murderers.'"

And the Elders shook their heads and whispered one to another, and Hanan continued, saying:

"We straitly commanded you not to speak of this man and of His crazy boasting. But you have spread His doctrine abroad, filling Jerusalem with the tale that He was the Son of God, and that we of the Sanhedrin had slain Him. You have sought to bring upon us this Man's blood. I herewith charge you with the blasphemy of calling Him God! There is but the one God, the

Lord God of Israel, the God of our fathers. The Messiah has not yet come."

Then Peter, turning to the Elders, said:

"We bear witness to the truth. I will show you that the High Priest and those that were with him slew the Messiah, the Prince of Life. And now He sitteth on the right hand of God, and hath sent us, His servants, to bear tidings of the truth to all the world.

"Ye may ask, 'What did He show you of the Spirit that is of God?' He was born in Bethlehem, of the seed of Jesse. He came as the prophets of old foretold, and He did teach what had never been taught before—the forgiveness of sins, and the love that one man should bear for another. And He showed that He was God through miracles and signs.

"He raised a man from the dead; He cast out devils; He healed the sick. I did see Him spit upon the clay of the ground, and, taking it in His hands, He laid it upon the eyes of a blind man, saying, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, and thou shalt see from this hour.' And that man, who was blind from his mother's womb, found his sight, and he believed in our Lord Jesus Christ from that day forth.

"But you have not found your sight—you are blind. You mocked at our Saviour and our Master when He, the Messiah, came to you preaching the law of Moses and adding unto it the wisdom of the Spirit, and the teaching that all men should be brothers one to another, neither greater nor less, seeking not their own, but seeking only the will of God, which is the good of all.

"You have mocked at our Saviour and our Master. But we shall bear witness to the truth and to His shameful death. You may put us in hold; you may persecute and scourge us, or slay us as you slew Him; but, as long as we have life, we shall bear testimony unto His name, for He hath sent the Holy Spirit of God to us, and this is yet another sign that He was the Messiah.

"I am an ignorant man, yet, through the power of the Holy Spirit which He hath sent, have I healed the sick and opened the doors of the prison.

"Brethren, Elders, and men of Israel! I do entreat you to be healed of this blindness, and, even in this hour, to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, whom you hanged upon a tree."

They would not let Peter speak further, and were greatly angered at these words. And the old men forgot that they were Elders; they shouted at Peter and shook their fists at him.

Gamaliel was not one of these tormentors. He was scornful of

the wrath of the Elders, and, rising up in the midst of them, rebuked them, saying :

“ You are like unto barbarians. Like wild beasts you would tear these men. Bawl not at them as if drunken with new wine, or like the harlot bereft of her lover ! Be men and Elders, not as the beasts of the wilderness ! ”

And the priests and merchants were ashamed. They mocked no more, and returned to their seats, whispering one with another.

Then Gamaliel, the learned doctor, called the guards who were without ; and he bade them take these twelve men and keep watch over them, while the Elders spake with one another and judgment was sought.

CHAPTER XII

GAMALIEL ADDRESSES THE ASSEMBLY

WHEN the council chamber was cleared and the Elders were gathered about the table, Gamaliel asked of them whether they had aught to say concerning the words of Peter and James. And one by one they rose and gave their judgment concerning the defence that had been made by the Brethren. They were of accord as to the evil seed that was being sown by these men in Judæa and as to the tares that would spring up from their teachings.

Gamaliel listened courteously to all, bowing to each one as he ceased and another arose in his place. No man might read the thought of Gamaliel ; smooth as a stone was his brow, and his eyes told naught of the secrets within ; so that when Hanan, the last to rise and speak, turned towards Gamaliel, he was glad at heart because this learned doctor, whom the people loved, seemed in his manner to be in agreement with these Elders.

“ You have seen,” said the High Priest, “ that these men be no common criminals. They have at heart the destruction of the State and the destruction of ourselves. This Christ of theirs prated of the resurrection of His body, and His followers teach this doctrine to all the people.”

When he had ended, Gamaliel rose up to give judgment :

“ Fathers, Brethren, and Elders, this man they call the Christ is dead. What He is now mattereth not to me ! It is by the fruits of this man’s life and teaching that we must judge. I will first speak of the words of James. He hath shown us that this Christ

was wise in His understanding of the nature of man—how he is half a beast and half a spirit. If he live as the beasts, seeking but his own share of food, and setting at naught all those that hunger and be of his kindred, then the present order of things will continue, and the time be at hand when the poor will hunger and there will be famine in the land. The Christ hath seen this, and shown you that, if the spirit is to overcome and rule the beast, man must set all in order, make equal division of possessions, gather others of like mind who will also make common division, thus laying up a store for the lean years that will surely come. The salvation of Judæa, Brethren, lieth perhaps in these Brotherhoods.”

And, raising his hand, his voice waxed loud, seeking to quell the mutterings of the Elders, who were sore displeased.

“Thou art indeed a follower of the Nazarene!” cried one. “Surely thou art of the company of these men,” mocked another.

“Nay, father!” Gamaliel made answer. “I would not be of these men. By their fruits ye shall know them! These men have not overcome the beast, as Jesus surely did overcome it, so that it perished—and by so doing He gave forth a wisdom that is strange, and yet nearer to the truth than any! What do these men teach? What is their doctrine?”

“They repeat certain of the words of Jesus of Bethlehem; but they go about the city reviling the High Priest, by charging him with the slaying of the man whom they call their prophet. They would see vengeance fall upon those that had to do with the hanging of their teacher upon a tree. They seek to stir up the people. They follow not the teaching in this matter of their Master Christ, whose words they have spoken this day, saying, ‘Love your enemies. Bless them that hate you.’ And so I will have none of these men; for the spirit of the Master ruleth not in all things within them.”

Gamaliel had been taught by learned Greeks, and reasoned with great subtlety, seeking to confound the one side and the other, so that both might be silenced. Then would he deliver judgment.

He would show that the teaching of the Christ was of the spirit, but that the Disciples were as other men, and not as gods, and that he would not be one of them. The charge was made that he was of their company and should be one of them. So he sought to show that he, a Pharisee, had contempt for them, as the Pharisee had contempt for all.

He called to them to hearken to him, saying:

“I have shown you that I am no follower of Christ. Now I would speak concerning these men and what should be done with them. It would be a hard matter to prevail upon the Governor to have these

Twelve crucified ; for they have the knowledge of healing from their Master Christ ; nay it is more than knowledge ; it hath the power of the Spirit behind it.

“ They have wrought miracles. The daughter of a Roman who hath the ear of the Governor was healed of a sore disease, was raised up from her bed by one they call Peter, and she walked from that hour. Therefore these Twelve are no common men ; some power of the Spirit is within them, and may some day wholly overcome the beast, so that they shall of a truth be the children of God. Men of Israel ! Take heed what ye do with these men ! ”

“ They seek to overthrow us. How knowest thou that they be of God ? Thou judgest in haste ! ” spake Hanan.

Then spake Gamaliel. “ My counsel is that a watch be set upon these Twelve. Thus you shall know as the time passeth whether they be of God or man. One Theudias rose up and told the multitude that he was a prophet. Many gave him welcome and believed on him. But they were scattered, for he was vain and foolhardy and thought but of his own glory.

“ There was also one Judas, who sought in the days of the taxing to stir up the people to turn on those who sought tribute. And Judas told them that he spake in the name of the Lord and that they need have no fear, for his cause would prevail. Yet were his followers dispersed and he was slain.”

As Gamaliel spake thus, a great shouting arose from without, and the multitude demanded with one voice that the prisoners should be released and given unto the people, for they were prophets and healers, and should therefore be given their freedom, so that they might work further marvels among the people. The turmoil and shouting were for a short space only, but it caused uneasiness among the Elders, and they looked from one to another, fearing the wrath of the people.

When the shouting ceased, Gamaliel spoke once more, saying : “ Refrain from these men, and let them alone ; for if their counsel or their works be of men, it will be overthrown ; but if it be of God, you will not overthrow it, but be found to be fighting against God. Set a watch on them, therefore, fathers and brethren, but let them go in peace, for they will work out their own undoing if it be the will of the Most High.”

Hanan and the elders would not let them withdraw unscathed, lest the people gloried in their triumph and said their Master was in very truth the Messiah.

So the Twelve were scourged, and they went forth praising and blessing God because he had counted them worthy to suffer thus.

CHAPTER XIII

JOHN THE DREAMER, GAMALIEL THE SOPHIST, AND SAUL

IN those days, when the Romans ruled in Judæa, there had been much coming and going among the nations round about : even the Jews sought no longer to hold themselves apart from the learning of other lands. They were wont to go to Athens and to study in the schools there, to garner the fruits of Greek wisdom, for the Greeks, though heathens, were famous for the subtlety of their reasoning.

With great sureness could such an one as Gamaliel speak of the laws of Moses and defend them, when he had sharpened his understanding upon the whetstone of the Greek.

Peter had spoken concerning the teaching of the Master, and it roused in Gamaliel thoughts of the Spirit as it was spoken of by the learned men of Greece. It was but to confuse the elder Jews, who had no knowledge of Greek learning, that he likened man to dark and light, to the spirit and the beast. Before his discourse was ended he had shown that these Twelve, with their new doctrine, did not in any manner transgress the law of Moses. Also that persecution was like water on a thirsty land, and encouraged the growth of what it sought to destroy.

Of these and other matters did Gamaliel speak, seeking also with subtleties concerning the law of Moses to make strife between the Sadducees and certain of the Priests.

Gamaliel counted for much in those days, and he was drawn towards the teaching of our Master Christ. Yet, at a later time, when the Disciple John and Joseph sought him out, he would have none of it, saying that if all men were as Jesus Christ, then he would be His servant and His follower ; but, as none were like Him, he could not be a Christian.

“ He taught,” said Gamaliel to John, “ a doctrine that no man can follow in perfection. Men will always stumble beneath the load, or stray into strange paths of error far from the road which Christ had trod. I have studied His teachings ; they are for angels, not for men. They are for the Kingdom Invisible, not the visible kingdom.”

And John the Dreamer made answer, “ O Father of Israel, the sun giveth forth light, and yet we, being far from it, glory in its rays. So do we glory in the light of our dear Lord Christ. You speak concerning His teachings, saying : ‘ It is for a Kingdom Invisible, and not for the visible world, which is so far from grace ! It was in

truth of the Kingdom of Heaven that our Master taught ; and we seek to make its image here on earth. It may be dim and without light, as the harvest of our dreams is but a fading memory when we waken. But we cherish the memory of that dream of beauty : it giveth joy and happiness to us all the day, so that our hearts sing for gladness. We cannot be as the Son of God, for we are not God, but men ; but we seek to mould ourselves according to His image. ”

And Gamaliel shook his head in sadness. “ Thou art young and full of hope,” he said ; “ thou wilt soon be old as I am, grey, and with a body shrivelled like withered grass. Then shalt thou see that dreams, as all else under the sun, are vanity, and leave nought but bitterness behind.”

And John laughed, saying : “ If thou wilt bide with me in stillness for awhile, I will show thee the Dream of our Master for the future ; thou shalt see that all the Gentiles worship Him and all nations know Him as the Lord, and learn His teachings, and sing praises unto Him. All this will I show thee as in a dream ; and it shall be the truth.”

“ For thy vision, though not doubting it, I may not stay, O youthful prophet,” Gamaliel answered. “ But if, in truth, all nations at some future time shall worship Him and sing praises unto Him, yet will they not follow His teachings, which are fit only for angels, not for men ! I can no longer hearken unto thee, for one Saul seeketh me, and I must speak with him concerning the true wisdom which you will find in the laws of our fathers, and not in idle dreams. He hath found it so, and he will be a ruler in Israel, young man, for he listeneth not unto the foolishness of the hour, but studieth the wisdom of our fathers ! ”

And John went from the presence of the learned doctor sad at heart. For it had been shown him when he was in prayer that he must seek out Gamaliel and speak with him concerning our Lord Jesus Christ ; such speaking would bear fruits for the Church of Christ. But he perceived that the learned Elder had but mocked at him.

Now Saul was a young man strong in body and strong in mind, but lately come from Rome with letters to Gamaliel, and he was seeking from this doctor instruction in the law of Moses and in the mysteries of the Temple.

The mind of Gamaliel, his teacher, was full of the words of John and of the doctrine of Christ, and he spoke of them to the young man Saul as “ the revelation that had been given to the young Jew.” And Gamaliel pleaded for Christ, and revealed to Saul the beauty of His teaching, subtly building up the edifice of the Church stone by stone.

And Saul, who was eager to oppose those who at that time might set up any revelation that was not according to tradition and according to his belief, sought to show the evil which such men as the disciples would bring to Judæa, and even to the Temple and the law of Moses.

And Gamaliel made soft answers, speaking for Christ in the words of John, casting fuel upon the fire, so that Saul but disputed all the more and hardened his heart against the saints.

For Gamaliel, being at heart a mocker, flavoured his words with the poison of his derision. And it made these Christians seem at last to Saul like the Evil One that prowleth about seeking whom he may destroy. And Saul vowed in his heart that he would stir up Judæa, and dissolve the Church of Christ by persecution.

Gamaliel loved argument, for he was a dialectician, and his aim was to show this young man from Rome that he was unskilled in argument, despite his study in other lands. The old man was also of two minds; his heart believed in the Master Christ, and his reason rejected the teaching He had given to Judæa. And there being in him a war between the heart and the reason, Gamaliel tried with the play of words to silence the yearning that was within him.

When he saw that Saul was greatly angered, he spoke no more of the Nazarene, as some called Christ, but drew the young man into talk concerning the laws of Moses, seeking thus to gain the measure of his understanding.

I have told you this tale, because much came of the vision of John and of his speech with Gamaliel. On a later day Saul bethought him of his vow, and of the anger roused in him by the words of Gamaliel concerning Christ. It was he planned what was the first persecution of the Christians.

CHAPTER XIV

SAUL IS CONFUTED BY STEPHEN

SAUL was circumcised and was taught the law of Moses. In his childhood he had lived in Rome and in Judæa. He had come now to Judæa seeking his kindred and to learn the law and traditions of Israel.

Saul was a man of impetuous temper, and, when he was crossed, the image of the thing that had roused his wrath burnt as a hot

iron burns, setting its brand upon his memory. He was strong of purpose, and the words of John that were spoken by Gamaliel, and twisted out of their form by his subtleties of speech, caused Saul to think of persecution, so that the anger of his heart might be sated, and so that he might show the Elders that he, who was a young man and unknown, could, by his zeal for the Lord God of Israel and for the laws of Moses, prove his own excellence and obtain place and power.

The seed that lieth in the earth is hidden, but in its due season it will spring up and bear fruit. It was thus with John. He deemed his hour with Gamaliel as wasted time, but in due time it bore fruit. The persecution, which was planned by Saul, caused many Jews who were Christians to flee from Judæa and seek other lands.

And to these lands they bore the tidings of our Lord Jesus Christ ; they ploughed the ground in many places, and prepared it for the coming of the sower, who was to be one of the Twelve, or one chosen to teach the Word of Christ and bear light to the people who were in great darkness. Behind the Twelve, called the Apostles, was ever an Unseen Hand to guide them in their ways and set their feet on a sure road.

In the beginning they were as other Jews, seeking at first their own people with tidings of Jesus.

So it was needful that they should be led forth from their own nation ; and, casting from them the customs of their forefathers, should bear the Word of Christ Jesus to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Now Saul, in his zeal, sought out certain of the rich men and Elders of Judæa and spoke with them of the saints.

He showed them that what they believed to be a passing growth, sprung up in a night, was a deadly weed that would poison the land of Judæa.

He told them he had heard a young man of the name of Stephen saying that the saints, when they were increased in numbers, were minded to fulfil the commandment of their prophet Jesus, who, in His anger at the manner of His death, had ordered His followers to destroy Jerusalem in three days.

Subtle is the mind of man, and words may be twisted, and an evil tale be wrought out of fair words. Saul, in his ardour, believed the idle sayings repeated to him, and to these words he unwittingly added more, seeking to make the charge so grave that it must move these Elders and rich men so that they would seek to destroy, in a frenzy of fear, what Saul now hated.

“ These people have a plan,” he said, “ whereby they will, in the heat of the summer, bring fire to Jerusalem, and, on a night when the hot wind of the desert blows, they will fire the wooden houses, and with torches the Temple itself.”

He would lower his voice, whispering that the Roman Emperor had privily given moneys and the promise of more gold to the Disciples if they would destroy Jerusalem, so that he might be freed from governing a turbulent people who rendered but a small tribute to Cæsar and would, if sold as slaves, bring far more gold to Rome.

Saul was but lately come from Rome. He could speak with authority, and it was known that he had been with certain Senators ; and so many believed in the tale which he had told to each as a secret.

And, as is the way with secrets, it was whispered in the chamber of every man of repute in Jerusalem ; and few knew who had first brought these tidings to the Jews. Many of the common people heard tell of it, yet it had not reached the ears of the Romans. For the Jews spoke much among themselves, but shut the doors of their minds when they had intercourse with the Romans. There was no trust between these two nations.

Then the Devil possessed Saul, the Devil of pride. When he had gone forth from the company of Gamaliel he heard the voice of a young man in a synagogue speaking of the doctrine of Christ. This was Stephen, to whom the light of our Lord Christ was but lately come, and he was eager and full of zeal, teaching and preaching daily among the people.

If Saul had not been angered by the words of Gamaliel concerning the new prophet, he would not have stayed to listen to Stephen. But, while his humour was still evil, and while the mockery of the old man still sounded in his ears, he met with this other who spoke of Christ—a young man who, in the eyes of Saul, was but a beardless boy.

And Saul rose up among the multitude that were about Stephen and sought to show that Stephen, in his ignorance, was spreading false doctrine among the people—doctrine that was contrary to the laws of Moses.

Now Stephen had learnt the law of Moses in the Temple and knew it better than most Jews, for it had been his wish, before he had heard the tidings of Christ, to be a Priest and to serve in the Temple. So he was well able to give Saul back argument for argument, and to show him that the teaching of the Master Christ was but the crown set upon the old religion, the old faith wrought by Moses and given to him by God.

Saul was not used to the rougher ways of speech in Jerusalem nor to the gibing of the people. The Jews in those days loved to dispute concerning the laws of Moses, as greatly as the Romans loved the sport of the arena. They knew not that Saul was of good repute, and had power and influence with the Elders. They liked not his anger when he was shown to speak ignorantly by Stephen, who was quick of speech.

Great was the laughter of the people, and so angered was Saul that he sought out Stephen and raised a hand to strike him on the brow. Then the people cried out, saying that he had broken the laws of disputation; and they cast him forth from among them, tearing his purple raiment and casting earth and dust upon the fine clothes in which he had apparelled himself for the purpose of seeking an audience with Gamaliel.

So was it that this young Jew, but lately come from Rome to teach his people and display his learning, was cast out from among them when he first sought publicly to make disputation. And Saul fled before these common people, some being but beggars, and was much dismayed. And certain of those who were his friends saw him in this pass and beat off the mob that were at his heels.

And the seed of a great hatred was sown in the heart of Saul. From that day forth he rested not, seeking to prepare the people of Jerusalem for the persecution, seeking with the evil tale I have told you to set them against the saints, so that they would be rooted up and destroyed.

CHAPTER XV

THE INCREASE OF THE CHURCH : THE APPOINTMENT OF THE TREASURERS

THE disputation between Stephen and Saul was a short space after the trial of the Twelve. They had gone forth rejoicing in their stripes and praising the Lord. Many days passed before Saul's tale had so spread among the people that certain of them, and they the most powerful, turned their hearts away from the teachings of the Twelve and saw in them but secret emissaries of Rome.

While the evil was travelling from mouth to mouth, from chamber to chamber, the Church of Christ was prospering, and numbers

daily believed on the Saviour. In the days before the trial, many had magnified the Messiah secretly, but had been afraid to declare themselves openly. And now that it was noised abroad that James and Peter had confounded the most cunning lawyer in Israel, and had shown the High Priest that faith in Christ was no new religion, but that it was the blossom of the old, those who had worshipped in secret openly made known to their kindred that they were of the Church of Christ.

Hundreds came daily to the Twelve and listened to their teachings, and many of them brought all that they possessed and offered it to the Disciples. The Twelve could not teach and keep charge of the moneys, making a fair division. It was not within the power of these few men.

The Jews who dwelt at Jerusalem, it was said, held those other Jews who came from strange lands to be inferior people. Certain Cretan Jews, Libyan Jews, and Grecian Jews, made believe that they were derided and set at naught by those of the Brethren who had lived their lives in Judæa. This was foolishness, and their murmurings were unseemly and unjust. They sought for a cause which would give them a reason for speaking against those who scorned them. Some of the women, having been neglected through this sudden increase of the Church, came to the Twelve and demanded that certain of their own peculiar people should be set in authority.

Now these were ill fitted to wield authority. And James, who was ever the thinker in matters that were for the common weal, told these men of divers lands that the Twelve, having knowledge of all within the fold, would choose those that were prepared for the service of the Brethren. And he showed these ignorant men that those who are ministers and would have authority in the Church of Christ must be, of a truth, servants, if they lived according to the teaching that had been given them.

Full of wisdom were the words of James, and these men were sore ashamed, and they entreated pardon of the Twelve. And they went forth from their presence content, knowing that those who are appointed to rule in the Church of Christ are appointed also to serve. Then did the Twelve withdraw themselves for a short space from the company of the saints, and they sought to build up the shape of the Church.

I have shown the manner in which the threads were gathered within the distaff of the Lord. I would now speak concerning the assembly of the Twelve which followed upon the murmurings of the Jews of other lands.

They came together to sit in council after they had partaken of the Feast of Remembrance and kept the Hour of the Watch. When the lesser Brethren had spoken, James rose up among them, and made his charge concerning the life of the saints at Jerusalem.

“Brethren, we will share with one another as our Master bade us share. We shall have a treasury, but it must be given over to certain chosen men who are diligent and versed in the ordering of households.

“There shall be an order of women that shall be guided in all things by the treasurers. These women shall wait upon the sick and fulfil the needful offices of service, so that those who have the Holy Ghost within them and the knowledge of the Word, may be freed for the spreading of the light among men.”

And all were of one accord in holding that these words of James should be the foundations of the building of the Church.

Peter held that the men and women who were chosen for these two orders should never have known marriage, and should take the vow of chastity so long as they were within the order.

“If they have husband or wife or child,” he said, “they will not be able to render service only to the Church of Christ. They will seek also to serve those of their family, and thus their labours will be divided; they will be tempted to render the greater service to husband, wife, or child.”

Now James was not in agreement with Peter on this head. “Marriage is needful for many who are fitted for this service; and must we be denied their stewardship because they are married? Will they not work with greater zeal if they have contentment in their heart, and will they not have greater knowledge of the needs of others if they have lived with one another according to the ordinance of the Church?”

Some of the Brethren went with Peter and some with James.

Now Joseph was called before the Twelve, and he, being a man of much wisdom, was asked for his judgment in this matter. He said that with the people of Judæa this ordinance would serve, but with the Jews of other nations, and with the Gentiles, it would not serve; and that those who, at a later time, gathered together people of divers lands, should use their own wisdom concerning this matter of service and marriage.

When Joseph spake concerning the Gentiles, there was an outcry; some were still doubtful as to whether the tidings of our Lord should be given to the Gentiles. Some held that they should first be proselytes and observe the law of Moses before they observed the law of Christ. There were Jews in many lands, and it was held

that these should be gathered within the Church, and only such of the Gentiles as had been converted to the law of Moses and had been circumcised.

Joseph made answer that the matter of these two orders had been shown to John in a dream, when John had seen what was to be the charge of Joseph and how he would end his life in a far land ; and that he would not rest till this land, which was girt about by water, was found by him.

There were many white roads, many rough places, and many waters to cross ; the years would pass and Joseph would be aged. But when he had come to that land he would set up two orders of men and women. Each would be for service, and they would build the Church of Christ in that strange far land. And where the Church was set, there would be a holy charge that would draw many to Christ.

So it came to pass that on that day the order of the treasurers, or sharers, was made. Lots were cast, and Philip, Stephen, Nicholas, and others were summoned from without. To seven of these young men were given the keys, and to them were given the names of all within the Church.

And a Scribe was appointed unto them, and another unto the Disciples, whose task it was to make a chronicle, under the guidance of the three, of Peter, James, and John, of all the signs and wonders that had been wrought, and of all that came to pass within the Church.

CHAPTER XVI

FURTHER MATTERS CONCERNING THE POLICY OF THE CHURCH

A HARD matter for ordering rose up within the Church at Jerusalem when the Seven were chosen. Some said that it was needful that all those of one trade should share their moneys and keep them within the trade. In this wise the fishermen or the carpenters would have set themselves wholly apart from the other Brethren in the matter of possessions, and would in time have come to seek but their own increase and prosperity, to the detriment of those of the saints who worked not at their trade. The Seven who had been chosen sought the counsel of James, who was prepared with his answer :

“ The carpenters shall have a certain portion set apart for their tools from the common store ; the fishermen shall have a portion

given them for their nets and boats ; thus the needs of each trade will be supplied in full measure. But all moneys obtained by trading must be paid into the treasury. Brethren, if each trade setteth itself apart in the matter of possessions, there will be no true sharing within our Church.

“ Within our Church there shall be gathered the members of all trades, beggars and drunken, the wise and the ignorant, the sick and the whole, and each one of you shall know that he hath charge of the other.

“ When a Disciple foundeth a new Church, he must seek to gather within it not one manner of man alone. For the strength of the Brotherhood it is needful that divers kinds shall be within the one community, so that it shall be increased in strength, each bearing to the common store his own peculiar talent.

“ Prizes shall be given, as the Greeks give prizes for their games. These will be for those who show the greater zeal in the work.

“ But, Brethren, in your instruction of the children ye shall show them that there is no shame like the shame that shall fall on him who neglects service, and seeketh ease for his body and the pleasures of idleness.

“ The Seven who have been chosen will set no hard measure of toil upon the Brethren. They shall in all things be just, and before any member of our Brotherhood be cast forth he shall be judged by the Twelve, and they shall give him a hearing, and judgments shall be given afterwards.”

The Disciples laid their hands upon those who were chosen. This laying of their hands upon them was a custom which signified the granting of office to another.

The Twelve Disciples granted what had been theirs in this manner to the Seven. It hath been told by many that the Holy Ghost was thus drawn to them. This could not be so, for it lieth within each man to draw the Holy Spirit of God to him. If he hath faith and purity of heart, then shall it be given unto him in full measure.

“ The Kingdom of God is within you.” Such is the teaching of the Master Christ ; and that signifies the power to draw the Holy Ghost within you. No man can give to another this power. He can but exhort him, so that he prepare his soul and have it in readiness for the charge that shall be rendered unto him.

The Seven were good men, pure of heart and chosen for their zeal. They went forth upon the work given to them. But only Stephen, Philip, and Nicholas were truly possessed of the Holy Spirit ; it

came to them at times, and at times were they as other men, no light shining out from within them.

This coming and going of the Spirit was more marked with Stephen than with the other two. When it was within him it possessed him wholly. When it visited Philip and Nicholas, it was as the passing breath of the wind. But when it was not within Stephen he was greatly changed. Words would fail him, the power to heal went from him, and he was as a stone is to a living man to what he had been an hour before. This failing proved his undoing in his hour of need.

CHAPTER XVII

STEPHEN RAISES A CHILD FROM THE DEAD

STEPHEN, the first among the Seven, was dear to John. John could speak with him concerning his dreams and of the manner in which the Spirit visited him, giving that light of knowledge that is not of the earth.

In those days the power of speaking in many tongues, the power of healing and of showing the might of faith by signs and wonders, was manifested in the Twelve, but not in others.

Now Stephen yearned to draw the tongue of fire to him, the visible sign of the Holy Presence, and he hearkened diligently unto John, and so did Philip and Nicholas. One dim and sultry evening, having prepared themselves, they sought by prayer and wrestling with the evil that is without, to make themselves ready for that most Holy Spirit.

When dawn was breaking they kept the Festival of Remembrance, breaking bread and tasting wine; after that they watched about the table, as I have told you, with joined hands. A great quiet fell upon all, and they waited in faith till the wind shook the chamber and little blooms of fire took shape upon the air. And Stephen, Philip, and Nicholas were filled with the Spirit, and spoke in strange tongues; and all the while John, who had prayed for the bestowal of this light upon these three, did lie as one dead, the Spirit passing, through the aid of his Body of Light, to the three youths who had watched all the night through and waited in faith during that hushed hour for the holy coming.

Philip and Nicholas received the power of speaking in strange tongues, but Stephen was filled with the light of the Spirit, and it

told him to go forth and he would find one that needed deliverance from the darkness.

It was yet early ; few were abroad, and Stephen knew not what his work would be. He followed a winding road that led without the city walls, and he did not pause in his journey till the sun was up and he had come to a rich merchant's house.

I will speak of this merchant, for his tale hath perished. He was one who had sought to stir up the Elders against the Disciples, for he feared the loss of great possessions if their Church increased in numbers.

This man was Gideon, one that lived evilly ; he practised evil in secret, appearing to be good and holy to those about him and to the Elders.

When he found his wife to be a believer in our Lord Christ, he was greatly angered, and threatened to put her from him if she continued to believe in the teachings of the Master.

Now their child fell sick and lay in a great fever, and she watched by him night and day. On the night that Stephen watched for the holy coming, Gideon came to his house a drunkard, with men and women from the lowest quarter of the town.

They feasted till daybreak in a room beneath the one in which the sick child lay, and, as the dawn was breaking, the child gave one loud cry, and a trembling seizing upon him, he died. The mother, crazy with her grief, went to the chamber where they had been feasting to stop the merriment and the evil talk, telling them of the child who lay dead in the chamber above them.

It was then that Stephen entered within the house, as the Voice bade him, and passed into the chamber where they were feasting. The woman thought he was but another of her husband's friends, and yet he was still and strange even to her anguished eyes, and in a few words she told him her tale. And, having hearkened, he cried out in a stern voice and bade the feasters be still.

They laughed no more ; there was no more jesting and foolish talk among them ; for Stephen spake with the Voice of the Spirit, and all idle clamour is hushed by it.

He told them of the dead child, and spoke hardly to the father, bidding him and his company rise and come to wait upon the dead.

When they were all gathered in the upper chamber, he took the hands of the woman in his, and told her that the Master had bidden him come to her in her hour of need and, if she would believe, her child would live again.

The father was wailing and beating his breast, crying out, " Ye

cannot call back the dead. My son is gone from me, and this is my punishment."

Stephen bade him be silent, and again all were hushed, for the Spirit caused the light to shine forth from him and it enfolded the child. Then the young man took the still warm body in his arms, and whispered into the boy's ear words that were not heard by those who watched fearfully about these two, the dead and the living.

Of a sudden the child stirred, and Stephen cried out: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I bid thee enter again thy body, and be whole!"

And the child raised its head and smiled. Then, laying the little one upon the bed, Stephen turned and chid these evil men and women of the town, telling them to sin no more, but to seek salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. And he comforted the woman; and the husband, not knowing how this miracle had been wrought, threw himself at the feet of Stephen, calling him prophet and master.

Then Stephen cleared the chamber, and he drew unto him this sinner, telling him that it was through our Lord Christ alone that the child had been made whole; and he taught him concerning the Church and the Brethren and the Word that must be spread abroad among all men concerning the coming of the Messiah.

This was the first miracle wrought by Stephen, and all those who saw it believed, and they were added unto the Church, becoming zealous workers for the faith of Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STONING OF STEPHEN

I WOULD continue the chronicle of Stephen.

Gideon led his wife and son with him to the court of the Temple and told all who would hearken the tale of his conversion; how he had been a wine-bibber and one consorting with harlots; how his son had been raised from the dead; and of his own redemption from evil ways through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who had sent to him the man of God, to wit, Stephen, with pardon and with a wondrous sign, showing the infinite mercy of the Lord.

Many were Priests who heard Gideon, for he was a man who did

evil only in secret, and was held in high esteem by those who knew not of his evil practices.

These Priests sought out Stephen and entreated him to give them tidings of Jesus Christ. And the other deacons, learning of the urgent entreaties of these people, set Stephen free from the charge of the treasury for the work of teaching and of preaching in the synagogue.

As the tidings passed from mouth to mouth, the one miracle wrought by Stephen became many miracles ; so that when Stephen rose up in the synagogue to preach, the court could not contain the press of people, and Stephen went forth and spoke without, that all might see him, even if they could not hear him. And the Jews of divers nations gathered about him, so that the place was dark with people.

And Saul at this sight was greatly disturbed in mind ; his hate increased as the fame of Stephen increased among the people ; and he sought out those merchants to whom he had borne his tale of malice—to wit, the destruction of Jerusalem through the Brethren led by this wild man Stephen.

And the Elders and merchants believed his tale, and yet were they afraid of the people. “ If we lay hands on these men,” they said, “ we may be stoned or slain, for these ignorant people believe in the signs and wonders wrought by Stephen.”

Then Saul sought out certain Jews but lately come on a pilgrimage to the Temple from other lands, and he poisoned their minds against the saints, saying that, if they were not destroyed, the old faith would meet with destruction and the Jewish race be scattered and lost.

Now these men, Cilicians, Libyans and others, had little fear of the people, for they dwelt not in Jerusalem and their possessions were in other lands. But they cherished the faith of their fathers, and were ready to set a snare of words for Stephen when he expounded the teaching of the Lord unto the people.

The time was ripe for Saul's purpose. Stephen, in the might of his belief and in the triumph of his power, had healed others. And Saul was eager to check this flood that threatened to sweep all before it.

Now, the law of Moses may be very subtly interpreted and much misused by men of cunning speech and evil heart. They demanded of Stephen, when he stood upon the open place teaching those about him, if he had not said that Jesus of Nazareth was God.

And Stephen made answer that this was so. Then they charged him with blasphemy, saying that there was, according to the law of

Moses, but one God, and not several gods ; Stephen had spoken even of a third, the Holy Ghost, which he had said entered into him and healed the child that was dead.

Then Stephen strove with them, showing that the Master was the Blessed One whose coming was foretold by the prophets. And they made subtle answers, drawing him on to rites and observances, and striving to show that he, Stephen, had taught that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was all that was needful for redemption from sin.

While they disputed thus, others chosen by Saul mingled with the crowd—men who hated the Christians and were prepared to make prisoner any Christian who spoke with authority. Some of these were hired by Saul, and had money and clothes from him, to overbear the young teacher when the sign was given, and drag him before the High Priest.

When Stephen had worsted the strangers who disputed with him, those who were in waiting rose up and, shouting that he was a blasphemer and the messenger of the Evil One, laid violent hands upon him ; he did not struggle, but suffered them to strike him and spit upon his face, for he was glad to be chastened for the Lord's sake. And they bore him before the High Priest, who had been prepared for his coming.

Stephen was not put in public ward, but judged in haste. They were afraid lest the people might gather together and make insurrection against them if it was noised abroad that he had been summoned for trial. The Cilicians and other strangers of their company made more fully their charges of blasphemy before the High Priest.

When they had ended, Stephen made answer and strove to show them all that the teaching of Christ could be made one with the law of Moses ; that Christ was the chosen one of whom the prophets spoke ; that the Christians sought not to make division in faith, but to strengthen faith and show the fulfilment of the old prophecies.

Such was the power of Stephen's speech that Saul feared he might not be condemned on this matter, so he bethought him of a snare in which he might entrap Stephen. Not by doctrine, but by a sign, would he catch him in the net. There was danger, even so, that he might escape from it, but Saul was ready to dare much when his hate was roused in those days before his redemption.

He spoke Stephen fair, asking questions concerning the power of the Holy Ghost and how, working within the man, it would work miracles of healing. And Stephen said that this was so, and that through the grace of this Holy Spirit, which was of God, he would continue to heal the sick and make whole the dying.

Saul demanded that Stephen be set aside for a space. Then a man was borne into the assembly whose body had rotted, so that he had but half his limbs ; he was so foul that the elders hid their faces ; only with loathing could man or woman look upon this leper.

Stephen was now led back by his guards. The trap being set for him, Saul charged him with the words he had uttered concerning his powers of healing through the Holy Spirit, and then called on him, if he were not an impostor and a blasphemer, to render unto this leper the limbs that had crumbled away, and to make him whole and clean in the sight of the people.

The multitude pressed within and heard the charge of Saul, and saw Stephen spent and weary, for he had been teaching for many hours and was emptied of strength and will, and not fitted for this trial. The Holy Spirit hath naught to do with man's body, but if he be worn and spent it is easier for doubt to enter within his heart, for fear to combat the faith of his soul. Stephen perceived that all eyes were on him, and knew that if this sign were not given the Church would be much injured ; the ignorant would lose their faith and he, Stephen, would be slain.

But his heart failed him in that hour of trial. He prayed, yet doubted the answer to his prayer, so the Holy Spirit fell not upon him, and there was no touch of healing in his hands when he laid them upon the leper and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost bade him be whole.

The people did not stir. All men watched in silence for the great change, and Saul set his gaze on Stephen, and was the first to speak, saying, " This man is still a leper. Wherefore canst thou not heal him ? Where is thy God who giveth thee this wondrous power of which thou hast boasted in the Synagogue and in the marketplace ? "

And Stephen strove yet again with the leper, but he had no more power than a dead creature ; and the man whose body had rotted was led forth from the hall unhealed.

And Stephen made answer to the question of the High Priest, saying : " Yea, I have failed. The power was not within me. Yet am I no impostor. You are a generation that seek after signs ; and lo ! because of the evil that is within you, the sign this day has been withheld from you, even as in the old days. Your people were led forth into captivity, and the Lord God of Israel sent them no sign because of their abominations. Like them, you are stiff-necked and seek to persecute as your fathers persecuted the prophets. You have slain the Messiah and yet are not sated."

Here the High Priest, Saul, and those about him did make a great outcry, and set themselves upon Stephen, dragging him forth from the place of assembly. For they were in a frenzy of anger, and they knew full well that one who had failed in his hour of trial to show them a sign would by the multitude be counted an impostor, and no mercy would they give to him.

When Stephen was without the chamber he stumbled, and those about him set him on his feet. Then one who had buffeted him more than others cried out, saying, "He burneth! Behold the flame!"

And, indeed, there was a light like of fire in his countenance, causing it to shine, and about him there was a radiance that was not of this earth.

For fear and doubt were gone from Stephen, and the Spirit he had called in vain reigned within the temple of his body now. He knew in that great moment of joy that the Master had not deserted him, and that he was deemed worthy to suffer for His sake. All the great anguish of his failure passed from Stephen on this wondrous coming of the Spirit, that did so enfold him about that his wounds gave him no pain, and the rage of his persecutors stirred only a great compassion within him.

And, raising his eyes to Heaven, and his hand to bless those that railed on him, he perceived the Master, and saw that He was with God. And he blessed these people who had been hushed with fear, and he told them of what he saw in the Heavens.

Then they wavered, muttering and whispering one to another, "He is a man of God. Let him go in peace. Behold the light that is about him!"

Perceiving that their temper was changed, Saul called unto those he had hired, telling them to accomplish their task. And some obeyed, and they did stone Stephen. Thus he, who was the youngest of the Seven who were chosen, was the first to yield up his spirit, dying without pain, blessing those that slew him, passing from them as a bird through the air, till it be beyond the sight of man.

Those who saw him die, and had been hired for this purpose, were sore cast down, and they feared they had slain one who was the chosen of the Lord.

When the drunkenness of their anger had passed from them, they left the body of the dead saint upon the road and they sought out Saul, saying: "This is an ill thing that you have done, and we shall have no share in it."

They cast the cloaks which he had bestowed on them before

him, and also the price of their hire, departing from his presence with shamed faces and fear in their hearts. For in that last hour of Stephen, the martyred one, they had seen God.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SHADOW OF PERSECUTION

PHILIP had great love for Stephen, and he waited without the place of assembly when his brother in Christ was being judged within. Gladly would Philip have hung upon the cross for Stephen; yet he would not raise a hand against the persecutors. When they dragged him from the hall, maiming and causing blood to flow from the young body, Philip, by reason of the faith which telleth man to turn the other cheek, stayed his hand, though his heart burned, and he could not see those who were stoning the beloved brother for his tears. He knew little of the end of Stephen; his mind was away in prayer that anger might not rise within him, until one touched him on the sleeve. It was Nicholas, who said: "It is finished. He is asleep."

Then Philip saw the scattered crowd, the blood upon the road and Saul, who was standing a little apart, watching as a kite watches the dying in the desert. Near him in the dust lay Stephen, and gladness was on the face of his persecutor; but it changed to sternness when the hired men cast their cloaks at his feet and passed down the road with shamed faces and heads hung down.

The shouting had ceased. Men whispered one to another. The sky was dark, and fear was in the faces of those that stood by. Phillip went to the body, and, kneeling beside it, he prayed aloud, calling on Jesus Christ to receive the spirit of the brother.

And Saul came to him. Hard and cruel were his words. He told Philip and Nicholas to cease their praying.

They paid no heed to him till the prayer was ended. Then Philip rose; filled with the Holy Spirit, he spake with Saul, saying: "We shall take out the brother and bury him. Some day you will learn that this is an ill deed that you have wrought. Yet it will but strengthen all our Brethren in the faith."

And Saul struck him on the mouth, saying, "Begone! This man's body shall be cast into the pit; no burial shall be given, for he is a malefactor, and, if you lay hands upon him to give him

burial, you also shall be counted as malefactors and cast into prison."

Philip answered, saying: "Brother, thou wilt repent thee of thy sin; thou art not so far off from the grace of the Lord Christ as thou wouldst have us believe."

Then he called two of those who had stoned Stephen, and who had cast their cloaks before Saul and demanded aid of them.

Without a word these slayers lifted up, with Philip and Nicholas, the body of Stephen, bearing it along the road. Saul summoned the other men he had hired that were not yet gone from the place of the slaying.

But they would not hearken to him. So he turned him about, and, having gazed upon the face of Philip in great earnestness, he said: "This shall be required of you; many shall perish and your followers shall be scattered. I will root out this ill weed you call the Church of Christ from Judæa."

Stephen was laid in a tomb. And on that eve the Disciples gathered together, and they sought counsel of one another.

John had seen, when in a dream, the vision of many sheep scattered upon the hillside, and of a wolf that sought to devour them; and he saw a lamb that had been slain. By this token, he knew that the death of Stephen was the sign of a persecution that would fall upon the Church; and in that hour they gave one to another the choice of flight or the choice of holding fast.

They all declared themselves prepared for death. Not one would take advantage of an offer that had been made by a rich Jew from Athens who would have taken in his train any of the Twelve who would flee from the wrath that was coming.

But they gave into his charge certain of the weaker Brethren, and, despite the argument of those who contended that the Church would be destroyed if the Twelve were taken, cast into prison, and maybe slain, they would not depart; for it was the will of the Lord that they should remain, they who were the Elders of the Church.

The six brothers who had charge of the ministrations were summoned before them; they rendered an account of the moneys; and Philip and Nicholas told the tale of Stephen's death once more.

These two were released from service, it being thought fit that they should be disguised and despatched from Jerusalem upon a mission to Samaria. In Samaria there would be more safety. The Disciples knew that the Deacons and Lesser Brethren would in all likelihood be seized upon first.

Now there was a reason for the journey to Samaria. A false

Christ had arisen there—one Simon. It was needful that the truth should be borne to that region by two who could be spared by the Church for the work.

The moneys were taken to a safe place, to a cave in a hill in the country without Jerusalem. It was buried there in the ground, the Brethren keeping back such portion of it as was considered needful for the daily bread of the saints, the women, and children.

Few preparations were made ; the Disciples could but warn the people of the persecution that was coming, and urge those who were fearful to seek safety in other lands.

A few score of them assembled and were blessed by the Twelve before they set out on their journey ; they promised to spread the tidings of Jesus among the Jews in those countries to which they hastened in their dread of persecution.

The knowledge of this scourge to come was made known by the Spirit only to John. No one had brought word of it to them. Saul worked in secret, and he would not, till the hour was ripe, make known to the people that the Christians were to be counted as felons and persecuted.

The anger of Saul was not sated by the death of Stephen : it only made the greater his hunger for the destruction of the believers in our Lord. He sought out the High Priest, and these two spake with certain of the Sanhedrin, telling them that the people of Jerusalem would not so far permit persecution because of the many miracles of healing wrought by Peter, and because of the signs and wonders wrought by others who were followers of Christ.

But now one of them had failed in his hour of trial. He had called in vain upon the Power that gave strength to heal. Because of this the common people were murmuring among themselves, and full of doubt, for many had known this leper, and many who were not Christians counted upon Stephen to make him whole.

Saul, with cunning speech, showed the Elders that this, then, was the hour when they should go with him to the Governor and bear testimony against the Christians, saying :

“ These people are conspirators. They share all goods with one another ; so must they be robbers who divide their spoil ; and they have also a plan to set fire to Jerusalem, and in the confusion to pillage those who have many possessions. They speak openly of certain words of their Master, who declared that He would destroy Jerusalem in three days. We therefore now ask permission to deal with the followers of this malefactor in such manner that the conspiracy shall be crushed. The people are with us, and we require only your word behind us in this matter.”

The Elders were well pleased with the counsel given by Saul, and they asked him to speak for them when they sought the presence of the Governor. If he succeeded in this entreaty, then would they give him charge of the persecution of the saints. This was what Saul desired. He had authority among the Sanhedrin, though young in years, and although but a little time before he had been unknown in Judæa.

He craved above all else the destruction of the Church of Christ, for his pride was wounded by the triumph of Stephen over him in the disputation in the synagogue; and he was haunted by the face of Stephen in his last hour. It was not the face of one who had been humbled; it was the face of a conqueror.

Saul was eloquent when he spake with the Governor, who, being a weak man, and having learned also from other Romans of the ill deeds of the saints, gave his consent to the persecution.

It was Saul who had sought out the Romans and sowed the evil seed in their minds. The net had been spread with cunning, and all was prepared for the destruction of the Church.

CHAPTER XX

THE MURDER OF THREE DEACONS BY SAUL

It was Saul's aim to sever the tree from its roots. He did not put the Apostles in the public ward—it was not lawful that any Jew should be put to death by his fellows: only the Roman Governor could pass sentence of death—but he sent officers in search of the seven Deacons. These had charge of the moneys and ministered unto the Brethren, so, if violent hands were laid on them, the Brotherhood would be crippled and the Church struck as with a palsy.

Now Philip and Nicholas fled in the night from Jerusalem, and, in the guise of beggars passed the guards that were set upon the roads.

There remained Prochorus, Timon, and Parmenas. These three were full of health and youth and eager for the Lord's work. In their charge was the scroll upon which was written the names of the saints, and what share should fall to them.

Seven others were chosen during the persecutions to take the place of the Deacons, and these were not known to the officers of the

Temple. These seven met the three Deacons on the eve when Philip and Nicholas set out for Samaria, and gave instructions to the young men as to the manner in which they should minister to all within the Church.

When the council was ended, the night was far spent and the three drew themselves apart. They prayed together, and, having sought the blessing of James, they chose three roads and parted one from another.

At midnight Saul had been given full power to deal with the Christians, and at dawn guards were posted outside the walls of Jerusalem—all picked men, some having gone privily among the saints so that they might become acquainted with the faces of the Christians.

Now Parmenas, Timon, and Prochorus were not in any disguise, for they thought to flee in safety at that early hour, and were taken with certain others of the Brethren who journeyed in their charge.

All were brought before Saul, and these three, being shown to him as being the Deacons, were set apart.

Saul spoke first with the other prisoners, and promised them their freedom if they would declare that Christ was a malefactor and that they believed but in the law of Moses.

All save one—a woman of fearful mind—refused to deny their Lord, and were sentenced to imprisonment and to scourging in the presence of the people.

Then Saul spoke alone with Prochorus, Timon, and Parmenas, and offered them pardon, money, and letters to his friends in Rome, if they would deliver to him the secret of the Church and the scroll whereon the names of the saints were written.

The three Deacons only laughed and mocked at their judge because of his mean bribery. And he made answer: "To-day you may be full of courage, for your young bodies have not known pain; but to-morrow may be you will have a different tale, and will entreat me for the pardon and the moneys I now offer you."

And these three young men answered in a manner that astonished Saul. They did not reproach him, but prayed in a loud voice for the soul of Saul to our Lord Christ, beseeching the Saviour to rescue him from the darkness in which he was enfolded.

And they ceased not from praying, so he could not make them hear his voice. In great anger he bade the guards set them in a prison apart from the others.

They were scourged, and when the sun was high in the heavens they were placed in bonds upon metal, without covering, their

wounds exposed to the rays of light, which scorched their living flesh.

They begged for water, but it was denied them, and but for their faith in our Lord Christ they would have been as all others who thus were persecuted—their wits going from them, the spirit straying from the shrivelled body.

These three were the first who were tried in that manner and escaped with their reason. When the sun was gone, they were cast into what was called a prison, but what was little better than a noisome pit.

Their sufferings ravaged them as few living men have been ravaged, so that even those that loved them would scarce have known them after days and nights of this torment.

Each morning they were loosed from their bonds and brought before their persecutor, and he tempted them with the pleasures of life and with freedom from pain if they would call the Master a malefactor and surrender the secret knowledge of the Church that was in their charge.

And always these three youths prayed for the soul of Saul, paying no heed to his utterances, the light of faith shining forth from their eyes. When the guards gagged them, they prayed inwardly, but when the gag was removed they broke forth into prayer again, and it was ever for the salvation of their persecutor.

This was a slow martyrdom, for they were in the prime of their strength, in the bloom of their youth. No brother was nigh to them to succour them with healing exhortation and with prayers. Daily were they tormented by the scalding sun and nightly by the crawling things of the earth.

Prochorus was the first to yield up his spirit, and, when two remained, Saul came to them in their prison and his heart was touched. He besought them to surrender and he would set them free on that hour.

They could only answer in a whisper, and Saul had to put his ear to their lips to hear the words; they were a prayer that the Lord Jesus Christ would release him from his blindness.

Then Saul strode forth from the prison dark with wrath and tormented in mind, for it had been whispered in the town that he had slain one of the Christians, and thus had he broken the law.

These two, Timon and Parmenas, after great crying and after a great quaking of their bodies, did also pass hence; and they had been, as the guards testified, steadfast unto the end.

These guards cast their arms and their clothes from them, and sought out one of the Apostles on that eve; and when they had

found Thaddæus they entreated him to baptise them. "For," they said, "We have had charge of men that were angels. They were not mortal. We also believe in their Master whom ye call Christ."

And Thaddæus, hearing these words, and seeing that they wore but the robe of the people and had cast from them the clothes of their office, did bring them unto the Apostles; and they were, in a later day, zealous workers for the Lord.

Now there was much talk concerning these three Deacons. Their guards had gone, and they had gone also. For the guards, fearing the wrath of Saul, had sought a place where they might hide, without Jerusalem.

And the High Priest and Gamaliel came to Saul. And Gamaliel spoke with him concerning the rumour that these three Christians had been slain.

Saul stoutly denied the charge, saying, "They and their guards did conspire together. The guards, being bribed by the Christians, loosed them, and all have fled from Judæa. They are no longer within my charge."

And Gamaliel spake with Saul concerning the folly of persecution. But Saul, who was haunted by the four Deacons whom he had slain, was more than ever set against the Christians, and he would not hearken unto the old man. Saul saw the shapes of the four youths, Stephen, Prochorus, Timon, and Parmenas, in dream, and always were they praying for his soul, beseeching their Master that he should be saved.

And Saul dared not rest, fearing these visitations; only when he was wearied utterly did he sleep. Unceasingly he continued in his work of persecution, and he was confident, believing in the righteousness of his deeds.

But, if he halted for an hour, these young men did shape themselves in his mind, ever praying for him. And he knew in his heart that they had conquered sin and death, and that only through some power of God could they have thus withstood the temptation of life and its joys. Therein lay the sting for one who still railed against Christ and told all men that the Master was a sorcerer possessed by demons.

CHAPTER XXI

SAUL'S HAND IS STAYED : HIS FAILURE TO KILL THE APOSTLES

Now Saul and the Elders were sore cast down at the stubbornness of the saints, and they held counsel together.

“Naught will destroy their false doctrine!” said one. “Nay, nay, the fear of death will humble them!” said another. And Saul was in agreement with this speaker.

So Hanan, who thought well of him, drew him aside, and they sought out the Governor and spoke with him concerning the dangers of insurrection. They told him that the Christians had planned to set a light to Jerusalem, and in the confusion to make an assault upon the Roman soldiers and seek to drive them from the land.

Now there had been much talk among the Romans concerning an uprising of the younger generation of the Jews. So they were prepared to lend an ear to this tale of a conspiracy. Yet they did not desire to sit in judgment on these Christians. So the Governor gave to the Elders and certain men of good repute the power to take life from the prisoners, if it was deemed necessary for the safety of the State.

Then Saul and Hanan chose from among their fellows those that hated the Christians, and to these was given power to judge whether a man should die. And judgment was decided by voting.

Now it was expressly laid down by the Governor that the Twelve should not come within the ruling of these judges. He was bound secretly, by one who was of his kindred, not to permit any hurt to be done to the Apostles. The father of the Roman maid who was healed by Peter had made this demand of the Governor before he departed from Judæa, and this kinsman had much power in Rome. So the Governor made a bond with the High Priest and Saul, saying that it would be foolish to lay hands upon the Twelve; they being the leaders, it would be more likely to cause a sudden rising of their followers if they were scourged and cast into prison.

Saul and the High Priest had to content themselves with the judging of the lesser saints; any of these who had preached or taught in the Temple were held to be guilty of sedition, of seeking to cause a rebellion among the people of Judæa. And they were sentenced to death.

The authority of Saul increased with the passing of the days during the persecution. It increased with the spreading of the tale that the saints were conspiring against the rich, and against

the merchants and the State. For Saul was zealous in his work, and ceased not from speaking against the saints. He haled them forth from the synagogues and their homes. And in those days numbers of the saints were done to death, so eager were those men for the shedding of innocent blood. Only in this manner could he escape from the Four Invisible Watchers whom he had caused to be slain, and who tormented his quiet hours with their prayers for his salvation.

So it came to pass that, when the Church was smitten with persecution, many were cast into prison by Saul. Even the mother and the babe to whom she gave suck were not spared, if she declared her faith in Christ Jesus. And all the women and children were herded together in the public prison, and so many were they, and so great the press amongst them, that the weaker died in great numbers.

Few were afraid of death. It was but another wonder that the old and young, the feeble and the strong, should make a joy of hardship, should glory in the stripes that were given them, should rejoice in their hunger and thirst.

Soon the prisons were filled, and, though these were visited by the Priests and the Elders, who sought to reason with the saints, yet they held fast to their faith in Christ Jesus.

Now the Elders and the High Priest were perplexed, because they could not crush out the faith in the prisoners' hearts. And it became a hard matter to find lodgment for those who were found daily to be members of the Church of Christ.

And the Elders sought out Saul, saying: "Thy persecution hath failed to destroy the new beliefs. Still these Twelve teach and preach, and their followers remain faithful to them."

But Saul asked them to have patience and give him more power. Many fled to other towns, and sent succour, money and food, to those who remained at Jerusalem.

In Damascus there were certain of the Christians who spread tidings of the Lord, and their doctrine was eating up the people as fire devours the parched grass. Soon there would be no belief in the Lord of Israel! Soon they would worship only this malefactor! So the High Priest and Elders gave Saul letters to be delivered unto those in authority in Damascus, and these letters gave him power to persecute in that region also and throughout Judæa.

The zeal of Saul increased daily, and, though he dared not put the Apostles in public ward, he contrived other ways to put an end to their labours for Christ. In his cold anger he set a snare for the Twelve.

Certain of his hired men had gone among the Brethren in the guise of Christians, and these had obtained tidings of the hour and the place wherein the Twelve assembled, so that they might pray together and hold counsel with one another as to the succouring of those who were in the greater need within the Church. And Saul did bethink him that if he gave much gold to certain men who were not officers, but people of bad repute, they would seek out the Twelve in their Hour of Council and mayhap slay them.

Then Saul bade certain young men of evil repute to his house, where a feast and much wine were set before them. No word was spoken concerning the slaying of the Twelve. He did but taunt and mock at these young men because they had permitted the Twelve to live, and had let them go unscathed.

Then he told them of the meeting-place of the Twelve, and incited these youths with wine and words, urging them to stand for the faith of their fathers and destroy the Church with the sword.

Now Azor was the leader of these young men, and he was quick to anger. And, the wine having heated his blood, he called on his companions to follow him and seek out the meeting-place of the Twelve.

A servant of Saul was prepared to give them guidance, and, when the night was fully come, they set forth armed with swords to wreak their vengeance upon the Brethren.

At the gate, Saul, knowing well the temper of these youths, sought to stay them. They were but the more eager when he, with cold words, warned them that this was a dangerous work, and that he would have none of it, for he liked not the spilling of blood.

They showed him their weapons and laughed at his speech, promising to bear into Jerusalem the heads of those who conspired with the "malefactor," as they called the Master Christ.

When the sound of their feet had died, Saul turned away with joyful mind at the thought that those whom he hated more than he hated the Evil One would soon be dead and ready for burying.

He fell into a muse, thinking of the authority and power that would be his if he destroyed the Church of Christ, when lo! the images of the three Deacons rose up before his vision again! Once more he heard their prayers for him, and these prayers seemed like bitter taunts rousing all the wrath within his soul.

Crying out upon them, he smote the air, as if he would strike the flesh of these shadows that were as visible to him in that still hour as the stars in Heaven.

Perceiving his folly, he passed from the chamber of feasting to a small room that was above it, where he slept. And there he knelt down and entreated the Lord God of Israel to bless his work, to exterminate this nest of scorpions before their poison had perverted the whole race of the Jews.

And he rose from his knees comforted, feeling sure in his heart that the Twelve would be slain that night, and, with them, the knowledge and memory of the Christ and all His works. And all that evening Saul was filled with a strange joy, thinking that he had triumphed over Stephen and his Brethren, and that these evil spirits, as he called them, would no longer torment his quiet hours, sleeping and waking, both in the night and in the day.

The moon gave her clear light to the young men who had feasted with him ; soon they were nigh to the secret place where the Twelve Disciples assembled to hold counsel and to keep the Hour of the Watch. It was needful in those perilous days for them to meet and seek, through the unison of the Twelve in one Body of Light, to bathe themselves once more in the Holy Spirit, and thus obtain guidance for all the Church.

They prayed and partook of the Feast of Remembrance ; they joined hands so that there might be a greater power for the mingling of the Holy Spirit with the mortal spirit. On this night Peter, James, and John were greatly stirred and filled with faith, though they had been warned that men with swords were seeking them, and at that very time were on their way to slay them.

Azor and his company of fifteen youths beat upon the closed doors ; on receiving no answer, they opened them and passed within. But the stillness of this house silenced Azor and his companions. They had been singing and shouting as they mounted the hill ; now they ceased of a sudden, and glanced from one to the other ; a great uneasiness fell upon them, and they whispered that the saints were maybe hidden and would rush out upon them with knives.

These youths had entered the chamber with drawn swords, and, when they were all within, their young bodies stiffened, they were as numb and still as idols in a temple ; they could not stir or raise a sword, but stared with fearful eyes upon the Twelve, who were seated with joined hands at the table, and in the midst of the table was the Cup of Remembrance.

The room was dim and misty, and a strange vapour rose from the Cup. It passed through the pale air, and it was thick and dense to the eye : it enwreathed these youths, and pressed upon them like the coils of a snake. They were choked and strove for breath.

But the Twelve stirred not, paying no heed, waiting with joined hands for the revelation of the Spirit.

Many tales were told of that night in Jerusalem. One said that the Lion of Judah did appear and guard the Twelve; another, that four beasts, never before seen by man, came out of the mists, so fearful in shape and in the blazing light of their eyes that none could face them and live.

But these are tales told by the youths, who in truth saw naught but mist and the dark vapour, and twelve of the Brethren possessed by the Holy Spirit.

After a short space the youths felt their bonds loosened. They fell on their faces and crept from the chamber, not like men, but like the beasts of the field.

Madness seized upon them, and they fled, as if death itself pursued, staying for naught by the way, resting not till they were within the town. And there they sought their kindred, and told of the strange sorcery upon the hill.

At a late hour Azor sought out Saul, and gave him tidings of what had befallen his company.

It was hard for Saul. He could not, for a space, believe the words of this youth, who was said to be without fear.

Then at last the persecutor knew that he had once more failed to uproot the tree of the Church, and he fell into a great anguish of spirit.

He knew now that there was some power, not of earth, that possessed these men, and that he was warring against some Mighty One who was greater even than Saul. And Saul was a proud man in those days, and believed that he had greater wisdom than all the Elders.

Soon the tale of the slayers was noised abroad, and it took many shapes. Yet the one I have given you is the truth, as it was told in the Book of James.

Fearing his own dreams, and fearing the reproaches of the Elders, the mockery of the merchants, Saul hastened away from Jerusalem, bearing with him letters to one Eleazar in Damascus, who had a great hatred for the Christians and had bidden Saul to that city with authority from the High Priest to persecute the Christians.

CHAPTER XXII

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL : HIS BAPTISM AS THE APOSTLE PAUL

I WILL speak of the change from darkness to light in the soul of Saul, for as the sun giveth light unto the moon, so did the teaching of our Lord Jesus give life unto what seemed dead and cold.

The tale of Saul is for all mankind. It doth show that however many the sins, however great the evil within the man, yet may it be purged, and he may through his own faith and the grace of the Holy Spirit become a prophet and a teacher, a holy one set apart, as Saul was set apart, a chosen vessel to bear the truth unto the Gentiles.

Now Saul and certain officers of the Temple set out upon the road to Damascus. It was not the season for the making of journeys, and there were few upon the road.

The sun gave forth a great heat, and Saul was weary. He had not slept for several nights, and all his days had been filled with cares. Certain of the Elders had spoken with him concerning his failure to uproot this heresy and he was filled with fury. Gamaliel had softly mocked, saying, "You have not yet bound Christ. The malefactor roveheth to and fro. Haste to snare the Christ, else will he come upon you unawares and overcome you!"

So Saul, as he journeyed, was spent in body and mind. And he was stricken in spirit, as a tree much bent by the scourging of four winds. Not the least of his torment was the memory of the four youths that prayed for him and had been done to death by him.

Hour by hour went by in silence, those in the company of Saul not daring to speak with him, so dark was his face and baleful the glance of his eyes.

It was nigh to Damascus. The company had fallen back a pace or so to speak together. And lo! as they muttered one to another, they heard a great cry, and they saw Saul cast up his hands to Heaven and throw himself on the ground.

No one was about him, no one before him on the road. They hastened to his aid. As they drew nigh to him, a Voice that was not Saul's came so softly that it seemed to steal out of the air, and the words it uttered caused them to halt, waiting for the answer of him who lay upon the ground, as if smitten by a spear.

"Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

These words were sounded three times, and after the third utterance Saul made answer. But his speech was broken and strange, and again the Voice was heard by the men of his company.

Then sought they who it might be that spoke thus with their master, and yet was not near. There were no trees, no shelter, upon the road. The land was bare and rocky.

Perceiving naught, they grew afraid, and raised Saul up, crying out, "Master, what ails thee? What is this strange Voice that calleth out of the air? Master, speak to us and give us comfort!"

And Saul, opening his eyes, gazed upon them and cried out, "It is dark! I hear your voices, yet I see nothing! The Lord hath spoken unto me. I have seen that Christ, whom I persecuted, is, in very truth, the Son of God."

And he told them of the vision of the Master. But they murmured one with another, saying, "His mind is stricken, but let us humour him, lest he rise up in wrath against us."

So they bore Saul into the house of Judas at Damascus, and sought out Eleazar, telling him that their master tarried by the way, sick. It was in their mind that Saul would be whole within a few hours or when the night was overpassed.

On the morrow Saul was still in darkness, and the darkness without was no greater than the fear and gloom within. For he was not yet whole in the Spirit, and wrestled with evil thoughts, and with anger that took upon it fearful shapes. In the after-time he would not willingly speak of those hours, so great was the torment, so fearful the anguish of this strong man.

For three days Saul lay in darkness and neither ate nor drank. He was shaken to the very depths of his being. Yet he was content, if it so pleased the Lord Jesus, to rest thus in darkness till death came to him. At times, it is true, a great despair seized him, for he yearned to undo the deeds of evil committed by him. Those whom he had done to death no longer troubled his peace, but he was fearful lest he should go down into the grave before he had shown by words that he was a believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

It was on the third day that a change came to him. The Voice once more sounded in his ear, and he was told that he might choose whether he would bear the tidings of our Lord unto the Gentiles or whether he would even now reject the work that was waiting for him. And Saul exulted in spirit, and cried out that he was ready, if his sight were given unto him, to bear testimony to his faith, and to do the bidding of the Voice, spreading the light among the heathen.

"Make no answer till I have made clear what lieth before thee if thou wouldst take this burden upon thyself." These were the words that sounded in the ears of Saul.

Then out of the night there came to him image after image of the

coming years. Strange were many of them, yet he understood their meaning as they passed by.

Here was a troop of young men like the young men who had feasted with him, and had sworn after he had talked with them to slay the Twelve Apostles. But these youths, imaged thus upon the night, cursed Saul, and showed their weapons unto him, swearing that they would not sleep nor eat until they had slain him, because he taught the people that Christ was the Messiah and had risen from the dead.

And another image succeeded, blotting out this shape. Saul perceived himself tied and bound, and men scourged him with whips, and spat upon him and buffeted him. In other images he hungered and thirsted in the wilderness, and he suffered all the pains of death many times from persecutions by the enemies of the Church. His own cruel death he saw—his martyrdom among the heathen in a distant land—and all this toil and pain and tribulation were for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fearful were the images in that blind night that was about Saul. When they had ceased, the dark was still and deep and once more the Voice spake unto him, saying: "Choose, Saul! Wilt thou bear this burden? Thou hast seen the tidings of the years before thee. Wilt thou receive thy sight and take upon thyself this life, or wilt thou cease from living, and thus escape from this charge?"

And Saul made answer: "I am ready, Lord! Show me the light and I will follow it!"

The Voice spake no more unto him, but on that eve Ananias came unto the house of Judas, and he, laying his hands upon the brow and upon the eyes of Saul, prayed that they should be opened, and that he should see. And lo! Saul was whole once more and saw those about him. And he forthwith entreated Ananias to baptise him, for he was a great sinner who had repented, and was prepared to show his zeal for the Lord.

Saul was overborne at last; his stubborn mind was bent into the shape that was needful, and peace came to him and he rested. For now was he the servant of Christ, and in service he found freedom and repose for his spirit.

At the very hour of his repentance, the Lord spake unto Ananias and commanded him to go unto the house of Judas and bring healing unto one who was named Saul and was blind. And this saint heeded his words, hasted forth from his dwelling, and sought out Saul.

Power was given unto Ananias to give sight both to the eyes and to the soul of this great sinner. Thus did a man who had no learning,

and but the simple faith of a child, lead this Pharisee to Christ who had studied in the Temple and had acquired the wisdom of the schools, and he showed him that in the teachings of the Lord there was true wisdom, beside which all other learning is but foolishness.

This is the tale of the healing of Saul. When he was baptised, they asked by what name he would be known among the Brethren. And he made answer : " I am vile. There is no name that I am worthy to bear, unless it be one that is a sign of my littleness of soul, of my weakness and of my foolishness in the days of my youth."

So was the name of Paul chosen by him. And in the days when he strove with the Gentiles, and the heathen wondered at him and called him " Master," it was his custom to whisper this name as a reminder that he was little in the sight of the Lord, and less worthy than the least among the Brethren.

CHAPTER XXIII

OF THE DIFFERENCE IN DOCTRINE BETWEEN THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES

PAUL was chosen for many reasons to be a vessel for the Lord. He had in his childhood lived at Tarsus, in Cilicia ; in his youth he was also in Rome. So had he knowledge of the Gentiles and their ways. His father was a Pharisee, and had sought to bring up his son according to their hard rule.

So from childhood Paul had zealously studied the faith of his fathers, and he believed with the Pharisees that a part of man dieth not. If he had been of the Sadducees, who believe that there is no rising from the dead, then it would be hard for him to have faith in our Lord, even after his vision of Him and after he had lost the sight of his eyes.

The Pharisees did not believe that Christ had risen in His mortal body and had appeared in this wise unto the Twelve.

But the doctrine of the Pharisees was not so much opposed to the teaching of the Master as the doctrine of the Sadducees, who believed that there was no resurrection.

The Sadducees believed in the Lord God of Israel ; in one who had created all things for His pleasure, who could build up and destroy ; who could once again cause some great prophet to arise among the people of those who had prophesied in the olden days.

Certain teachers were born again, according to their belief, but the multitudes, when they died, went down into the Pit, and they were as the grass of the field that withereth and is gone.

The people gave little thought to what followed death. The Priests and those who were learned believed that what was holy in man could not die. It was gathered as the ears of corn are gathered from the fields. The grains were one and yet many, all being gathered into one store.

There were certain of the prophets and learned men who judged only by the seasons. As the blossom and the flower withers and the seed is scattered, so, they said unto themselves, is the life of man. We die, and yet we live. We live in the children that are born to us.

It was thus a reproach in their eyes if a woman be barren, or if a man have no children to bear his name and life among the coming generations. There were ever two ways of thought. And the Sadducees were of those prophets who cried, "All is vanity!" for they saw little purpose in a life that was passed from one to another, that bore within it no memory, that seemed not to reap what it had sown. In the hearts of these men was only bitterness and despair.

CHAPTER XXIV

PAUL MAKES PUBLIC AVOWAL OF HIS CONVERSION

THERE were many Disciples in Damascus but lately gathered into the Church, and there was no leader or preacher among them. So they were in great dread when they heard of the coming of Saul, and of those who had died through him at Jerusalem.

They gathered together and sought counsel one with another. Some were for fleeing unto the coasts, but others, who had their trades and their families, knew that hunger might be their death if they left their work and wandered into strange places. Despair seized upon these Disciples; they beat their breasts and cried out that persecution was not to be borne.

If needful they would deny their faith. And they prayed with one voice, making known their weakness to the Master, beseeching Him that this cup of bitterness might pass from them, for they were not able to face persecution and still keep burning the light of the Church.

Then Ananias appeared among them and said, "I have been with Saul, brethren." At that a great lamentation arose, and all in that assembly believed that their last hours had come, for great was the terror of this evil name. At last, quieted by the strange bearing of Ananias, who lifted up his voice, giving thanks unto the Lord God for His many mercies, they asked of what mercies he spoke. And he told them of the miracle by the way, and that Saul was now a brother in Christ Jesus.

At these words Paul entered the chamber, and, making confession of his sins, showed the Brethren that he was one of them in faith—only, the least among them. But with fearful glances they passed him by, fleeing from that chamber, so that Ananias and Paul of all that gathering alone remained.

And Paul was greatly cast down, saying: "They will have none of me! I am as a leper. They will cast me forth from among them."

Then Ananias counselled him to go boldly into the synagogue and tell the tale of his vision of the Master, and to declare himself one of the Brethren. At that time they were not yet known as Christians.

It was soon after the hour of prayer; many were passing through the court without the synagogue when Paul arose and called unto the people to hearken.

Now Eleazar, who had known Paul in past times and who waited for his coming so that they might together persecute the Brethren, was entering the synagogue when he heard a voice that caused him to halt, for it had command in it and must be heeded. He was amazed to perceive Paul telling the people of Jesus of Nazareth, and how this Jesus had come to him and struck him blind because of his unbelief. And full confession did Paul make of his sins before his friend Eleazar could believe that this was indeed the guest for whom he had prepared a feast that was to herald the persecution and destruction of the Church.

When at last he knew that it was indeed the young Pharisee, the friend of his youth, he passed through the crowd and charged him with lying and blasphemy, with deception, with all the evil that he imagined to be in the hearts of those who believed in Christ.

Paul answered: "Brother, it is thou that art deceived. Thou liest unto God in doubting the truth that hath been laid before thee. The Messiah was hanged upon a tree and betrayed by us Jews unto the Gentiles."

Then there was a great commotion, Eleazar calling upon the officers of the synagogue to seize Saul, whom he charged with being possessed of devils. And the people were making a great clamour,

some saying, " This is Saul, the chosen of the High Priest " ; and others that he was an impostor ; and yet others that he was a brother of Saul of Tarsus ; and the people gathered about him so that, as they disputed, he slipped from among them, and, when the multitude was scattered by the officers, Saul was not there. And certain who were questioned said that he had not been there at all, and that it was but an idle dream.

Yet again Paul bore testimony unto Christ in the synagogue, so that what had been rumour and hearsay became knowledge. And the Disciples doubted no longer, and sought out Paul, welcoming him to Damascus, and asking him to dwell among them and aid them if persecution was set on foot by Eleazar.

But word was brought that Eleazar had made a plan to slay him, and with his servants was seeking him at that very hour throughout Damascus.

Gladly would Paul have faced the slayers, for he yearned to give his life for Christ ; but Ananias and another drew him aside, saying : " It is a harder matter for thee to live than to die, brother. The Lord has called, so that thou shalt go up into Jerusalem and destroy the snares thou hast laid there for the saints. The Brethren are dying daily because of thee. It lieth with thee, therefore, to undo this ill thing, to slay the beast thou hast created."

So they hid Paul in a hole beneath a floor, and the servants of Eleazar sought him throughout that quarter of the town. They walked upon that floor ; yet did they not find Paul. And Eleazar was greatly displeased. He set a watch at the gates of the city, and every man who passed out of it was questioned by the guard.

It was the custom during the night to pass goods over the walls when the gates were closed and the people slept. So they made a basket, and they laid Paul within it, and at daybreak he was lowered from the wall unto the ground and then borne in this wise over much country, and in the evening, when they were in safety, he was loosed from his cage.

CHAPTER XXV

THE CONFOUNDING OF SIMON THE SORCERER OF SAMARIA

I WOULD now speak of Simon and of Samaria. When the Master still walked upon the earth, a certain man named Simon did summon evil spirits and did, through their aid, work strange marvels among the simple people of Samaria. These spirits would, at his bidding, pelt men with stones, so that they would be persuaded that unclean spirits were seeking to enter into them and possess them. Then would they entreat Simon to drive away these evil creatures with his spells. And on the instant they would cease from their stoning. Much money was thus paid to Simon for driving hence the evil spirits he had raised.

Simon would frighten women by causing evil shapes to appear unto them ; and so cunning was he that they knew not that he had summoned these creatures and caused them, through his sorcery, to become visible to the eye. Then they would seek out the sorcerer, and entreat him to drive away these demons that followed them ; and he would, with words and signs, and by the power of his will, cause them to go hence and be no more seen. And these women gave him money and goods. The men also paid him in kind, and it was perceived that only those who had money were troubled by these evil spirits.

But Simon could only work for ill. He had no gift of healing. If a man were possessed by an unclean spirit, he could not cast him out from the sufferer. For he trafficked with the demons, and it is through the power of faith, the power of the Spirit, that men are made whole.

Now Simon made a journey to Jerusalem, and he witnessed certain of the miracles performed by the Master. He would have sought Him out and spoken unto Him, but it was nigh to the days of the trial and the crucifixion. And, on hearing that the Master had been hanged upon a tree, Simon returned to his own place. But he had greatly marvelled at the faith of the multitude who had hearkened to Christ, and he yearned for this power over other men.

So it came to pass that in the days following Pentecost, he spoke with certain dwellers in his own country, and he learned that many believed in their hearts that Christ was the Messiah, though they did not speak openly of it. So Simon withdrew himself into a desert place and there he practised the arts of magic. He grew a

beard, and let the hair of his head grow long ; and he wore goat-skins, and did bear the staff of a shepherd. Then, when he was sure of the obedience of his evil spirits, he came forth from that desert place and went into Samaria. He spoke unto the simple people of that land, saying : " I am he that was hanged upon a tree at Jerusalem, as ye have heard. I told you that I would rise again from the dead and appear unto you a living man once more. And, because the people of Samaria are dearer to me than any, I come unto them and show myself unto them, before I go up to Jerusalem and take my place as the Messiah."

These were the words of Simon, and many of the simple people believed that he was our Lord Jesus Christ. And they came and worshipped, laying offerings at his feet and calling him " Master."

Then was his fame noised abroad, and people came unto him from a great distance, bringing with them the sick, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, so that he might heal them. But he said unto them, " Ye be an evil and adulterous generation. Ye sought to slay your prophet, or have permitted that He should be slain. I am in truth the Son of God ; yet I will not heal you because of this evil that ye have wrought."

And they believed that their Messiah was angry, and were sorely afflicted, fearing that he would bring famine or plague upon the land. So they sought his forgiveness, bearing him rich gifts, and begging him to cease from his anger and show his mercy by causing the lame to walk and the blind to see.

Now, when his possessions were increased and much money was his, it was Simon's purpose to set out for the sea-coast and to seek another land, where he might become a merchant, bearing another name, who would be held in repute for his wealth, and for the number of his slaves.

Word was brought to the Apostles at Jerusalem that Christ had risen up in Samaria and was preaching to many, yet was he neither in his doctrine nor in the manner of his life like unto the Master. So Philip was sent unto the region of Samaria. And when he found Simon, he bowed not down to him as the pilgrims bowed, but rebuked him, saying : " I have been with our Blessed Lord. Thou blasphemest in taking upon thyself His name. Haste to repent, lest the Holy Ghost smite thee and thy body crumble as dust into the ground."

Now Philip was young in looks, and Simon defied him, calling him a beardless boy, and making mock of him. Then, when the people came and gathered themselves together without his house, Philip rose up among them, saying : " I am come to bear witness

to the truth. This man hath deceived you. He is not Christ, for I have seen the Master, and I know that this fellow is but a sorcerer, who can work no miracle, nor can he bear to you the true teachings of Christ. Ask him for a sign and he will not give one unto you. Yet shall I show you that I, who am the least among those who followed the Master Christ, may, through the Holy Spirit, heal those who are sick. For, though I am of little account, yet am I His servant, and thus I am blessed with His power to heal and to cast out devils."

Those who had been with Simon pressed about Philip, beseeching him to lay his hands on them and make them whole. And, Simon being present, Philip made answer to their entreaty by casting out from one woman unclean spirits, by giving sight to a boy who was blind, by causing an old man afflicted with a palsy to rise up and walk, declaring that he was whole; and there were others who clamoured to be healed.

And Philip said: "Ask your Messiah to heal you. Let him show you that he is our Master Christ by giving unto you signs that shall testify to his being the Son of God."

And when they came unto Simon with these words he was shamed, and cast himself at the feet of the Disciple, crying out, "I am not Christ! I have lied before you all! Yet I am prepared for repentance, and I believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and that He is risen into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God."

And Philip had compassion for Simon, and spake with him privily. And because his anguish was great, and because he had abased himself and laid his moneys at the feet of this Disciple, he was received into the Church and was baptised.

I would have you know that Simon in that hour truly repented, and was greatly shamed; and he did strive with the covetousness in his soul, and for a time did he triumph. But his mind changed as the wind changes. It was in part through fear of the wonders wrought by Philip that he was led to make confession and to repent of the evil he had done. So, though his sin was great, it had been pardoned. Howbeit, those who have intercourse with evil spirits may not lightly cast them off. So it was that Simon repented of his repentance; the old cunning of his nature returned, and he was tempted; and evil desires sprang up in his soul when the evil spirits whispered unto him in the hours of quiet.

Peter came unto Samaria when he learned that many believed because of the miracles of healing wrought by Philip through the power of the Holy Ghost; and when Simon learned that yet another who had been with the Master had come unto Samaria, he bethought

him that these two were not of God, but sorcerers who had great power through their knowledge of the manner in which a mighty Spirit could be summoned, who then became ready to obey them in all things. So he went to another village where certain moneys of his were hidden in the ground. And it came into his mind that he would buy the Holy Spirit from the Disciples. He would offer them gold for the secret words and signs which, he believed, summoned the Spirit.

And, greeting Peter as another and mightier sorcerer, he made his request unto him, showing him the moneys, believing that the sight of them would cause the Apostle to render up his secret.

Then Peter spake sternly to him, saying : " Thou art deserving of death. Let thy money perish. Let thy body be withered off the earth ; for thou hast blasphemed against the Holy Ghost."

And Simon quaked in all his limbs, and besought Peter to forgive, as the Master Christ forgave others, and to withdraw this blasting curse before his body withered from off the earth.

But there lurked within him all the vanity of a weak man. He would at any time sell the birthright of innocence and virtue for a foolish fame that cometh through leadership of an ignorant people. So, at a later time, Simon fell away once more. And of these many trespasses I may write at the appointed hour, setting them in due order in the chronicle.

CHAPTER XXVI

PAUL AND THE HIGH PRIEST : PAUL'S SCOURGING AND FLIGHT

Now while Paul was lying at Damascus the persecution of the saints increased greatly at Jerusalem.

The High Priest sought to drink up the Church as an ox drinks up a wayside pool. The prisons were filled with the Disciples, and each day the tribunal sat in the place of assembly and sentenced certain of the saints to death. The Apostles might not preach even without the walls, a strict watch being set on them.

And in that dread time many hearts failed, the Church was sorely oppressed, and the Twelve could not succour the weaker Brethren or comfort them by reason of the guard that had been set about them. So they prayed without ceasing unto the Lord that

the Church might be preserved and a miracle wrought before the rock of faith was riven, before all were scattered by the persecution of the Elders and the High Priest. For many had fled unto Crete and Cilicia, unto Cyprus and Antioch—wherever there might be safety.

It came to pass that, in the very hour when Hanan declared to the Priests in the Temple that he had overcome this heresy and destroyed the Church, tidings were brought unto him that Saul had lost his wits and was preaching in the synagogue at Damascus, declaring that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. When this was noised abroad in Jerusalem, there were murmurings among the people. And certain of the Elders, who had not dared to speak their minds, now declared to many that this persecution was evil, and that it would lead to turmoil, and peace in the town would be at an end. As waters whipped by the wind rise in flood, so did these words rise up, reaching unto the ears of the Governor. And he was perplexed, and sent unto Hanan, saying that he should deal less hardly with these followers of Christ, for ill might come of it, if the rod of punishment were wielded unsparingly. But Hanan silenced him with smooth words, promising that no harm would come of it.

As I have told you, Saul was lowered in a basket down the wall at Damascus; like a bale of merchandise he journeyed in the company of merchants unto Jerusalem.

It was near daybreak when he came into the city; and before he made himself known publicly he remained in prayer for an hour or more at the Temple, seeking guidance on that great day when he would declare for the first time in Jerusalem his faith in our Lord Christ.

He had set his heart on making confession of his errors in the presence of the multitude, and before those who hated the Messiah.

There were few in the Temple at that hour, and it was cold and dim, and Paul prayed for strength so that he might acquit himself bravely before his fellow-countrymen and confound his adversaries.

And lo! as he prayed, a light shone. It was not the rising sun, nor was it any light within the Temple. It was the Flame of the Most High, the lamp that perisheth not, that doth not grow old—the Light Everlasting. And a Voice spoke from the midst of the flame: "Hasten from Jerusalem, Paul. Bear not testimony in the synagogue. Thou art not chosen to bear the tidings of the Gospel to the Jews. Thou art chosen to bear the truth unto the Gentiles. So go forth from the city gates while the day is yet

young ; for the wicked are like an adder in thy path, and it is My will that thou shalt be preserved to speak for me among the heathen."

Now Paul had a wrestler's soul, and he had not yet learned to submit in all things to the Word of the Spirit. He yearned to preach in the city in which he had persecuted, to show the people the error of his ways, and thus win many souls for Christ. And he cried out : " Lord, let me speak but once in the synagogue. Let me tell of the vision on the road to Damascus. Let me abase myself before the people, so that they shall know Thy name and believe. Then will I depart in peace."

" Nay, Paul, thy word will not bring peace, but a sword," was the answer.

Then did this young Disciple beseech the Holy Spirit that he might be permitted to declare his faith.

" This is through pride and not through humbleness that thou wouldst thus confess thy sin," was the utterance of the Voice. " I will not stay thy hand in this matter. Thou must learn through suffering. Go ; speak in the synagogue, if thou wilt ; but ask not for the protection of the Spirit if thou art beset on the day when thou speakest."

The Light Everlasting did rise into the air and pass from the Temple, and lo ! Paul was alone. Confused he was in mind, not knowing which road he should follow. He sought out the Twelve, but they did not believe in his repentance. And when he was come among them, and when he had made confession of his sins and abased himself, they drew off from him, fearing that this was but another snare that had been set for them.

But Paul cast himself at the feet of James, beseeching him to hearken.

The Holy Ghost was not with the Apostle at that time, so he was as another man, without discernment, fearing many things, his heart failing him. Peter was not in Jerusalem, and the Apostles were cast down and believed that Paul came but to smite them, and thus destroy the last remnant of the faithful in Jerusalem. Yet they would not flee, holding fast, choosing death rather than that they should loose their hold upon the Holy City, where Christ had died for them.

Then was Paul sorely troubled in mind ; but the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying : " Go up unto the High Priest, and the Holy Ghost will show thee what thou shalt do in that hour. And thou shalt loose the bonds that are about the Church. Haste, therefore, so that a sign shall be given unto My children, and thou

shalt be approved by them and chosen to bear My name unto the Gentiles."

Then Paul girded up his loins and sought the High Priest at sunset, when he was alone within his chamber. Hanan knew not that his fellow-persecutor was in Jerusalem, and was glad at heart to lay eyes upon him once more. For Saul had been of more service to him than his right hand, and he believed that this young man would prevail with the Governor, who, that very day, had sent him word that his mind was not yet at rest concerning the persecution.

For Paul had been with the Governor and had spoken with him privily, confessing that he had erred, and had told lies about the Christ so that he might obtain power with the Elders. And he besought the Governor to give orders that the persecution should cease, and the prisoners be freed. Now the Governor was amazed at these words and gladly would he have hearkened unto them. But he was doubtful in his mind, fearing the Sanhedrin and the High Priest. So he would not yield to Paul. "Show me that Hanan is of thy mind; then will I let this people go." Such was his answer. "If the Elders and the Priests still seek the blood of these men, I cannot gainsay them; for some of them have power in Rome, and mayhap the word of Hanan would overthrow me." And the Governor was troubled in his mind, for he was a just man, and he had divined that it was from malice and jealousy that the Jews thus persecuted the followers of Christ.

So, when Paul was come unto the chamber of the High Priest, he was welcomed, but the greetings and salutations of peace from the High Priest, who sought to conceal his knowledge of what had befallen Paul at Damascus, were received by him in silence.

Hanan spake of the ordering of the tribunal for the judging of the saints, and of the manner in which the Church was being crushed, and of the tales that were told concerning evil sorceries that were practised by the Twelve, showing that they were possessed by the Evil One. Then Paul could no longer contain himself; with hasty words he told the High Priest of the vision on the road to Damascus, and of all that had befallen him since that time. He sought to win this old man for Christ. Yet are there some that naught will win from their evil purpose, and Hanan was one of these. Yet was he ever smooth of speech, and he spake unto Paul, saying:

"Thou hast been dreaming, or mayhap the heat of the sun gave thee a fever. I do not believe in this vision, nor will I believe in aught that is not given unto me in the teachings of Moses."

And Paul reasoned with him for a space without avail. Then did

the Spirit show him how he might manifest the truth even unto this crafty Priest. So he promised him that, if he would remain still, he would show him a sign as strange as the sign that was given upon the road to Damascus. And the High Priest was well-content, for he believed that no sign would be given, and then Paul would doubt, and be turned back with cunning speech from the road he had chosen.

The chamber was dim, but darkness had not yet come upon the earth. And Paul did gaze upon the High Priest. And as he gazed he prayed, yearning with all his soul for a sign that would confound Hanan. And strange was the vision that was set before them. There came within the chamber a long green body that seemed without end, coiling about the walls. And it was evil-smelling and foul. It had eyes that shone with a red light. And lo! Hanan looked upon it and knew it to be the old serpent whom ye call Satan. No sound came unto them as they watched; but the head of this evil beast drew nigh to the High Priest. No man could stir within that chamber. Dread had seized upon Hanan like a palsy, and he could not cry for help.

“ If thou wilt not let go the followers of the Christ, this serpent will devour thee, and thou shalt lie within his belly when thou hast passed out of Sheol ! ” Thus spake Paul; and once more there was silence. So still was the air, it was as if all living things had died. The serpent drew closer to Hanan; and, when it seemed that he, from fear, would yield up the ghost, it vanished, and there was thunder and lightning and many voices. And the chamber was shaken, and the two men within it did cast themselves on their faces, crying out unto God for mercy.

As a man cometh out of sleep, so did these two pass from out that hour when the sign was shown, entering once more into the living world as from some far place that is not nigh the earth.

Now Paul was much shaken; yet was he the first to speak; and he did prove to Hanan that, if he continued in his persecution of the saints, he would surely die, for another sign would be given him and he might not come back a second time from the jaws of the serpent.

And Hanan bethought him of Peter, and how this Apostle had smitten Ananias, so that he had died for what was a lesser offence in his eyes. Then did this cunning Priest know fear; for he judged that Christ had taught His Disciples certain secrets found by Him in Egypt, which was the land of sorceries. And he believed that he could not fight against these men and live. So, at the bidding of Paul, he sent word unto the Governor, saying that he was of one

mind with his brother Paul, and that the persecution should cease in Jerusalem, and that the prisoners should be freed. So the Governor gave orders that this should be done, and that the saints should be permitted to return to their houses.

Now there were certain of the Elders who were exceeding bitter in their hatred of the Master and His followers. These men were members of the tribunal, and some of their kindred were Grecian Jews who had a great feeling for the Temple and the traditions of their fathers. These were greatly dismayed when they learned that the saints were loosed from prison. And the Elders, who were seated at the tribunal, summoned the High Priest unto them, and he was yellow and shrunken as a shrivelled orange, and could scarcely speak, so greatly was his mind shaken by that hour passed in the dimness of his chamber. Yet he made it plain unto the Elders that he had chosen to be of the one mind with Paul, and that it was at their word that the Governor had caused the persecution to cease.

Then a great clamour arose, and the Elders strove with Hanan ; but he would not dispute with them, for there was no strength in him. He was dumb through a weakness begotten by fear, and he stumbled from the place of assembly upon the arm of his servant ; and the Elders on that instant received word from the Governor of Damascus, who was under Aretas, the King, that Paul had escaped from Damascus and had caused much scandal in that city through his teaching of sedition.

Eleazar, who was of the kindred of the Governor of Damascus, had first striven with him ; then, when they sought to seize upon him, he had been hidden away from the soldiers.

This was the tale of a messenger despatched by the Governor of Damascus to the Elders. This Governor was appointed by Aretas, and had full liberty to rule that city as it pleased him.

Now the Elders took counsel with one another, and they were minded not to act while great heat was on them. So it was determined that on the morrow they should go unto the Governor and demand that the persecution should continue until there was no longer any faith in the " malefactor," as the Master was called, in Judæa.

When the morrow was come and the Elders were assembled, Gamaliel appeared among them.

He was much disturbed in mind, for secret tidings had come to him from Rome. The Emperor would make of Judæa a Roman province, and it was rumoured that he desired to set a statue of himself in the Temple at Jerusalem, showing to this turbulent

people who it was that, of a truth, was their master and their god. He was angered at the smallness of the tribute rendered unto Cæsar, so it was his wish that this stiff-necked people should be put in bonds—should be forced to give in moneys what was considered seemly and the due of the Emperor. These rumours from Rome were baleful. Gamaliel had always feared that a heavy yoke would be laid upon the people of Judæa, and here was the menace of a greater persecution than had been known for many years.

The Elders had respect for Gamaliel, and they knew that what he foresaw to-day would come to pass on the morrow; so they hearkened unto him when he spake unto them, saying: "Jew persecuteth Jew; the brother's hand is raised against the brother. There is division among our people; so are we feeble and with no health in us, the prey of the Romans, because they stand to one another and are of one mind and one purpose. Brethren and Elders, let us cease from the persecution of one another. Let this strife with the followers of Christ be ended. So shall we be strong and prepared for the tempest that is coming upon us."

And no man lifted up his voice—no man disputed with the learned doctor. With grave countenances and anxious whisperings these old men passed from their council chamber. And no word was borne unto the Governor concerning the persecution of the saints.

Paul yearned for the blessing of the Twelve, and gladly would he have been of their company, so that he might sit at their feet and learn of the Master. But they would not hold speech with him, for they feared Paul and the destruction of which he might be the cause, no revelation having come to them concerning him. So he went into the synagogues at an early hour, and began to teach the Gospel of Christ, and to tell of his vision upon the road to Damascus, and his deliverance from the Evil One.

At that time no member of the Church of Christ taught in the synagogues. For, in the early days of the persecution, they had been driven thence with spears and goads. And some of the faithful had been slain when they had preached in open places, so that no man durst open his lips and preach the Gospel to the multitude within the walls in those evil days. Great was the uproar, therefore, when Paul rose up in the midst of the people and confessed his belief in the Messiah.

Certain Grecian Jews who had been taught to speak in the schools at Athens disputed with him, thinking with cunning speech to cause him to stumble. But he spake out boldly, paying no heed to them, telling of the Master Christ and of His infinite mercy. For He had forgiven Saul, the greatest of sinners and the least of men.

Then, when the Grecians perceived they could not ensnare him, they bided their time. They durst not lay hands upon him in the synagogue, for the Governor had made a proclamation that those who were of the sect of Jesus Christ should not be molested, and should be permitted to go free ; for they were as the other Jews of their nation, and under the protection of the laws.

So, when Paul ceased from speaking and went forth from the synagogue, the Grecians followed him ; but so did one of the saints who had hearkened to his teachings and was astonished by them. In a quiet place the Grecians came suddenly upon Paul, and, having seized him, they menaced him with rods, threatening to slay him if he would not declare that he had erred and that Christ was not the Son of God.

There was no yielding on his part. He would not deny his Lord. So they scourged him, and forty stripes were given unto him. Then were they affrighted, for he seemed not to breathe, and he was left as dead by them upon the road.

Now Barnabas was the saint who had followed Paul from the synagogue, and had witnessed in silence this persecution of the one-time persecutor. Strangely stirred was he by this torment of a great sinner, and he wept for his brother when the Grecians had departed and he was alone with the dead body.

But lo ! it stirred, rising and falling back upon the ground. Then Barnabas found a well near by, and he bathed Paul's wounds ; and, when a little strength returned, he helped him, with the aid of another saint, to a dwelling-house that was nigh to the road and in the possession of one of the Brethren—Cephas.

When Paul's wounds were healing and the weakness was gone from his limbs, Barnabas led him unto those who sat as the Twelve Apostles, and told them of the martyrdom of the new saint who had dared all for Christ. And they blessed him and talked with him of the Master.¹

The Grecians, learning that Paul, who had preached in the synagogue, was Saul the persecutor, sought to slay him. For they had turned back upon the road, seeking him on the day they had scourged him, so that they might make sure of his name and race. But there was no one on that road ; so they knew that he had not died, and they vowed that he would not pass out from Jerusalem a living man.

¹ " These Twelve were not the Twelve chosen by the Master. They were scattered abroad at that time. But there were ever twelve to sit in their places when they were not in Jerusalem. These were to the number of one hundred and forty-four. The twelve here mentioned had some authority as being of this number. When Paul was at Jerusalem in those days, of the Twelve Disciples who had followed Jesus and sat at His feet during His life, he spoke only with James and Peter."

One night a beggar, who was in the company of others seeking alms, departed from Jerusalem. Twisted as a sickle was he, and no man knew that he was Paul. He went down to Cæsarea, begging his way upon the road, and from thence was despatched to Tarsus.

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Paul was not known for many years as a teacher of Christ by the members of the Church in Judæa. They had but scant knowledge of him. They did not seek to hinder him in the time when the way was prepared for his journeyings. Thus it was that one who was last, in the west among the Gentiles, became first.

So ye know not, at the beginning of some great work, what will be the strange end to it.

He who uttereth Alpha may not utter Omega.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE STORY OF DORCAS

IN Joppa, a town that was upon the sea, dwelt a merchant who was of good repute, strict in his beliefs and one of the Elders of the synagogue. He was called Levi, and he had but one daughter, named Dorcas, who was much beloved by her father's friends.

In her youth certain of the merchants of the town sought her in marriage. But she desired to devote herself to the service of the Lord, so she remained a virgin, despite the wishes of her father, who desired that there should be men to follow him of his blood when he was gathered to his fathers.

Now Dorcas was in the middle years of her life when Levi determined that they should go up unto Jerusalem to worship in the Temple, and to trade, and speak with the Elders concerning the law of Moses. For he loved the faith of his fathers, and, turning neither to the right nor to the left, would walk only in the ways of Moses according to the laws that had been graven on the tables of stone.

Dorcas had given much thought unto the faith of her fathers, and had perceived that the younger generation of the Jews were not in any real manner ruled by it in Joppa. They lived carelessly, practising evil in secret, committing fornication, and privily breaking the law of Moses, while openly they would demand its observance.

They were like whited sepulchres in their souls ; and so it was that Dorcas had set her face against marriage with any one of these hypocrites. She often pondered upon this falling away from the faith of their fathers. Yet she could see no way to grace. They were an evil generation, that sought only the gratification of their lusts.

So Dorcas prayed unto the Lord God of Israel, entreating Him not to be angry with His people, to save them from themselves, and not to destroy them. And when she was with her father in Jerusalem there came unto her a light ; and she knew that her prayer had been answered, and that she was, perhaps, chosen as the one to bear this light unto her own people in Joppa.

It was on this wise. She was in her father's company at sunset, and they were passing along the road, when, of a sudden, she perceived a man who was like unto no other man, who was tall and straight, with the brow of a king and the walk of one having authority. Yet his eyes were gentle, and upon his face was a strange peace, as of one who had lived and suffered the woes of all men since the world began, so that at last he had winnowed from them the peace everlasting. Yet there was sorrow in the shape of his mouth and gladness in his glance. Before him men gave way, as if he were some great lord, yet he was but poorly clad, and his sandals were worn, his garments stained and soiled by the dust of many roads. And Dorcas, looking upon his face, cried out, " Master ! " casting herself at his feet. She knew not that He was Christ, but her spirit knew Him, and thus gave Him greeting.

Then did Christ withdraw a few paces from the road ; and, like a cloud of flies, the multitude, coming from all quarters, gathered about Him. Dorcas was still close to Him, and she heard Him teach the people, speaking in parables, and showing them how the Spirit is in all things, yet that we must be seekers of the Spirit or we shall not find it, losing ourselves only in the gross matter that decays. In simple tales this was told to the multitude. But the father of Dorcas would not tarry long, and he drew her into the depths of the crowd, so that she saw the Master no more.

All the evening of that day she gave thought unto the words He had uttered : and on the morrow, within the court of the Temple, she heard a young man preaching the Gospel of Christ, and telling the people that were about him of the words of the Master.

From that hour Dorcas believed on His name. She did not again see Christ ; but, by secret ways, she learned more about Him and His teachings. She might not seek Him openly, for her father

had been much with the Priests and Elders, and his bitterness against the followers of Christ was strong.

He had been told that the Master sought to destroy the law of Moses ; that He derided the prophets and declared that He was God. And when Dorcas affirmed her belief in the Master, as being one who, if He was not God, had walked with God, her father struck her on the mouth, and bade her be silent. And he sought by punishment to wean her from her faith in Christ. So she would not speak of Him. But, in the days when she had returned to Joppa, she kept all these teachings in her heart, seeking ever to shape them into one whole, so that they might be unto her as a staff of life.

And the evil increased in Joppa, and Dorcas was greatly troubled in mind concerning her own people. For they had become a byword and a reproach, and no one might stay them in their wicked ways.

Now was her father old, yet was he stern of spirit. When Dorcas spake of Christ to the women, it was made known unto him, and he commanded her to hold her peace, for, if she did continue in this manner, he would cast her out of doors.

As a bird carrieth a seed over great distances, and from that one seed there will spring forth a plant that begetteth many others, so a whole field of it may, in time, be ripe for harvest. Certain beggars came unto Dorcas for alms, and she taught them privily, and they did believe. Thus were the tidings of Christ first brought unto the humblest in Joppa, and the rich men, the sinners, knew naught of Christ. And Dorcas gathered about her good women who made clothes with her for the poor. And she taught them, bidding them to keep the Word of Christ from their husbands, if these might not be trusted to be silent on the matter, so that it might not come unto her father's ears.

Upon certain days of the week Dorcas and these women gave the garments they had made unto the poor, and then they prayed together and spoke of the words of the Master. Many more of these had been gathered by Dorcas from a young man, one of her kindred, who had come unto Joppa from Jerusalem for purposes of trade, and for a few days lived in her father's house.

But evil increased in the town, and Dorcas remained troubled in mind. Tidings had been given her by her kinsman of the hanging of Christ upon a tree, of His rising from the tomb, and of how He had been seen by many of His Disciples. So, when her father spoke of the evil end of the malefactor, and poured scorn upon the name of Jesus of Nazareth, she held her peace ; for the truth was

treasured in her heart, and she would not permit rust to fall upon it through any sharing of it with those to whom it was not holy.

Now, when the persecution had cast its shadow over Jerusalem, many rumours concerning it came to Joppa, so that at one time Dorcas believed that the candle of faith had been put out, and that she, and her women and her beggars, alone had belief in the Master. And she mourned the saints many days, and a great darkness of spirit was hers. Her father, with his mockery and his bitter words concerning the dead saints, gave her no rest, and peace was gone from her utterly; yet was it only for a space. She wrestled in prayer with her fears and doubts, and she triumphed over them.

Then were tidings borne unto Joppa that the persecution had ceased in Jerusalem. And Dorcas and the saints gave thanks unto the Lord for His mercy, and now were sure that naught could destroy the Church of Christ. But the evil increased among the rich Jews in Joppa and among all those who traded in that town.

Dorcas spoke unto her father concerning it, and he made answer that it was no concern of the women. And he bade her be silent, and remember that, with his passing, there would be none of his seed to follow after him, so that she had better look to her duties, and not have contempt for the wickedness of others. And Dorcas held her peace. But when she was alone she entreated the Lord to send one of the Apostles unto Joppa. And she prayed that he might come while yet she lived. She yearned for the salvation of her people.

Now there came no answer to the supplication of this sister, and fever visited the town; and she knew in her heart that she would be stricken by it. Yet she ministered unto the beggars, and sought in that evil time to succour all those in the faith who were possessed of this fever.

When it was nearly ended and she was weary, she fell sick also, and soon it was known in the town that she was like to die. Levi was stricken by this fever, and he was gathered to his fathers while she yet lived.

And, even in her sickness, her mind was clear, and she knew that she was dying and that for which she had yearned all her days was not to be granted unto her.

Dorcas spoke of this deep sorrow, telling a sister who tended her that it was Christ's will that she should not see the light of His faith in Joppa. It had been her prayer that she should be chosen for one great work of the Lord's. Yet this was not permitted, and so

she believed that she was a great sinner, and she did not die in peace, but died sorrowing.

Now when peace had been restored unto the Brethren, and all was in order at Jerusalem, Peter determined that he would seek the saints who were in all quarters without the town. Many of the saints who had fled from persecution had borne tidings of the Master to strange lands and to the regions round about Jerusalem. It was needful that one of the Twelve should go to aid them in their building up of the Brotherhood. For it was determined that each village should have its community. All these would look to the Twelve at Jerusalem for direction except in matters of daily import, where they would be guided by those who had wisdom among them.

So it was needful that Peter should instruct these saints who were scattered throughout the land in the ordering of their Churches, and strengthen their faith with his fiery words. Peter could exhort men to prayer, to faith, and to love and charity in a manner that stirred men's hearts, and won them through the workings of the Spirit rather than through the workings of the mind. This is the one sure way. Reason is but the unseeing brother of faith, and only through the guidance of faith can one attain unto that purity of the whole man that is seemly and is of sweet aspect in the eyes of God. It is because faith and reason are loosed from one another, and no longer guide and check each other, no longer keep the same step, that we of the Invisible seek to show you once again by words and signs the truth of the Invisible—the truth that Christ died for you.

Now Peter came unto Lydda, a little town, and there he found the faithful gathered together ; but they had no shepherd, and not a few among them doubted. So he abode with them for a space, and prayed that the Spirit might come unto him, that he might show a sign to these people of doubtful mind.

And he waited and watched, and lo ! one morning there came to him that stirring within—that sweeping about him of the winds, and that great gladness which is not of the earth. And Peter set forth in great joy from the house in which he lodged, and soon did he find that which his prayers had for many days sought in vain. A saint had lain stiff and rigid for eight years, as if his body were stone. He was not guided by the blind Brother Reason, but by the Brother Faith, who knew the messenger of Christ, and, with the voice of Æneas, the sick man, cried out : “ I have been waiting for thy coming, O holy prophet, these eight years. Heal me with the breath of the Spirit whom thou bearest within thy soul, and this body of mine shall rise up and walk and leap once more.”

And Peter laid his hand upon him, saying, " Arise, take up thy bed and walk."

There were many of the saints assembled about him, for they had talked of his faith and wondered at it, yet had they not believed that he could be made whole.

Howbeit, he arose on the instant, and, taking up his bed, he bore it from the chamber. Then all the people cried out with one voice, " He is of God ! " and they knelt down and gave thanks for the sign that had been shown. Certain of their company were traders, and they bore the tidings of this wonder to Joppa.

Now Dorcas was dying when they spoke with the beggars who were of the little Church of Christ which she had, through her faith and wisdom, built up in Joppa. And these beggars were waiting on the road outside the dwelling-house in which the sick woman lay, when word of the marvels wrought in Lydda was brought unto them. And they spoke with one another eagerly, saying, " Mayhap this holy man will drive forth this plague from Dorcas, if he cometh but in time." So two, who were runners, departed for Lydda to find Peter and bring him to the woman who had ministered to their souls and bodies, and was now herself in need.

The talk of the crowd caused a woman to come forth from the dwelling-house to bid them be silent. Then came another to summon them to the sick woman's chamber, for she was passing, and desired to look once more upon these beggars who were to her as brothers and sisters, nearer to her than her own kindred.

Free to enter the house now that her father was dead, they passed into the sick-chamber where she lay and struggled for the life that was leaving her. And on her face there was not the peace of one satisfied to enter into the rest of the Lord. For her prayer had not been granted. And the beggars who watched perceived that her soul was in anguish, and she was as a prisoner beating at the bars of his cage. They could not comfort her, for no words could reach her ; and so they perceived that she passed from her body sorrowing.

They made her ready for the burial, laying her between clean linen sheets, and bearing spices to her. The beggars stayed within her chamber, mourning and beating upon their breasts. Her kindred did not put them forth, for she had asked that they should be permitted to remain and watch by her dead body.

Then those who had departed for Lydda to find Peter returned. And Peter was with them. And he knew why he exulted so greatly in spirit—that a mighty work lay in his path if only he were found worthy to accomplish it.

They led him into the chamber in which lay his sister in Christ. And he, beholding her, knew of her yearning through the power of the Spirit that was within him. And, though he told no man, he perceived the Body of Light that bore within it this woman's spirit ; and it was nigh unto the body of flesh, and seeking to enter into it, because it had so yearned to remain within it until salvation was brought unto Joppa, and she had reaped the first fruits of her sowing in that barren place.

Then Peter cast about her the Holy Spirit that was blended with his Spirit. And it healed the flesh and made the mortal shape a temple wherein the spirit of Dorcas might again dwell.¹ And the beggars who watched this holy man saw naught save a little mist that did hang for an instant about these two ; and they heard only the words of Peter : " Tabitha, arise. Thy prayer has been granted."

And lo ! her body stirred like one who sleepeth and hath hard dreams. And all who were present united in prayer for her coming back from Sheol. And she sat up as they yearned, and smiled upon them. There was upon her no sign of the plague. Her body had the colours of health, and her voice was firm and strong as she gave this holy one greeting.

All were amazed, and the kindred of Dorcas hastened to the town with the tidings of this wonder. It passed from mouth to mouth like the wind, so that many men who were evil, and had mocked at Dorcas and her beggars, went to wait outside her house for the coming of Peter, sending word that they would hear him speak and would diligently hearken unto him.

The press was great when Peter came among them. And it was his hour. The Spirit had uplifted him, and he bore testimony unto Christ, speaking of His sacrifice upon the cross with such earnestness that all men believed. And the mockers repented of their evil talk. Those who had practised abominations came unto Peter and entreated him to baptise them and show them the light and the truth.

So Tabitha, when she once more walked abroad, found that a great work for the Lord had been accomplished through her ; and that through her dying was there testimony made, and the evil men and women of Joppa believed on the name of Christ.

¹ " I would tell you of a certain writing that was given to the people concerning the raising of Dorcas from the dead. A chronicler hath said that Peter put forth all those that were within the chamber of Dorcas. This was but a half of the truth. The press of people was great about the bed, so Peter told them to be gone ; and all but certain of the beggars and her kindred left the chamber. Those who remained did kneel down and watch, and I have written down for you what they saw in that hour."

The harlots cast their jewels and their fine clothes at the feet of Peter, the merchants bore unto him their moneys, and the old women ceased from painting their faces and tying their hair. Even the strict Pharisees, who believed, as had the father of Dorcas, in the laws of Moses, and who held that Christ was a malefactor, changed their ways of thought and confessed unto Peter that they had been misled and would now hold to the teachings of the Master.

Peter abode many days in Joppa, for the ordering of the Church was a hard matter in this town. Those who have been sunken in wickedness and turn swiftly to righteousness have many devils to wrestle with, and these oft-times gain the upper hand if there be not one near them when they stumble, to bear them up with words of faith.

There was no preacher in Joppa for a space. Yet Dorcas laboured unceasingly, and she spoke privily with the women, who then instructed their husbands in the teachings of the Master. Thus she laboured for many years in Joppa, and when, at last, she died, the town she loved was cleansed, and there was a smile of peace upon the dead face.

Tabitha is the first woman who bore the tidings of the Master unto a people who did not know Him. The chronicle of her labours has perished, so have I essayed to set it down for you.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TEMPTATION OF PAUL IN THE WILDERNESS

BARNABAS went unto Antioch, and he went with more than one purpose in his mind. He loved that strange man Paul, and had had no tidings of him; so he chose to seek out this blazing torch that seemed to have flickered out. It was easy to journey to Tarsus, and, when he had come there, tidings were given him that his friend had gone into the wilderness, and that many days might pass before he was found. Barnabas was troubled by these tidings; yet he was a man of much firmness of purpose, and no hardship caused him to turn back from the road he had chosen.

It was about the tenth hour of the day when Barnabas espied a hut in the wild place where Paul had chosen to lodge, and he perceived one who was more like a skeleton than a man. The figure that rose from the dust and came to give him greeting was tall and

gaunt, and, when salutations had passed between them, this starved man opened his mouth and spoke of his life in that desert place.

“Am I Saul or Paul?” was the question he asked of Barnabas. “Brother, but for a short time was I filled with the Spirit, then there came darkness again. Mine eyes were no more blinded, but the wrath of my flesh, and its hatred of the Master Christ and His followers, rose up within me. So did I flee from Tarsus and from men, fearing that once more Saul would rule over me. And here, in this loneliness, have I at times been possessed of devils, and I have yearned for the blood of the martyrs. I thought of the joys of persecution, and the sweet savour that arose from the afflictions of the prisoners who were tormented by me because of their faith in Christ. I have wrestled day by day with this Old Adam, Saul, and at times he triumphed, and I thought but of the manner in which I might once more prevail with the High Priest and the Elders in Judæa so that they would once more persecute the saints. Now with thy coming, brother, all is changed. I have but one desire, one faith, one hope, and that is Christ.”

And Barnabas made answer: “Friend Paul, the Spirit did give me guidance in this matter. I knew thy need, so am I come unto thee to wrestle with Saul for thy soul. This is but the time of preparation for thee. It showeth that thou hast been chosen for some great purpose. The Holy Spirit hath withdrawn from thee for a short space, so that thou mightest stand alone, for only in that manner mayst thou learn thy strength and thy weakness and to triumph over the Old Adam. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost I bid him begone from thee for ever. Saul hath no further part or lot with Paul. He is dead, and thou art risen out of this old evil that did torment thee for a space.”

Then Paul gave a great cry, saying that the Spirit was come unto him again. And he was changed from that hour and was like unto a man who hath in truth been with God.

For a short space he abode in that wilderness in the company of Barnabas, and he did exult in his new strength and was possessed with faith and the fear of God. That was the last time of failing with Paul, yet was it not so much failing as the hardening of all that was weak within him. So that he was, from that day forth, through his will, a giant among men. He might still be hasty of speech and stirred to wrath by the enemies of the Church, yet was he steadfast in all matters of the faith, and he yielded to no man in his joy in Christ Jesus, his joy in hardships, persecutions, stripes, and torments for the sake of the Master.

Paul was ashamed of this time of trial in the wilderness, and

few knew of it, and when he spoke of his sins, and that he was the lowest in the Church, he did bethink him of this time of weakness ; yet he spoke of it to no man save Barnabas, who was truly his friend and brother.

CHAPTER XXIX

PAUL'S DEALINGS AT PAPHOS WITH SERGIUS PAULUS, THE ROMAN GOVERNOR, AND ELYMAS THE MAGICIAN

LUCIUS, Simeon, and Manaen welcomed Paul, Barnabas, and Mark to Antioch, and all worked together in charity and love with one another. So the Church prospered, and the Spirit therefore commanded three of these to draw themselves apart, and guided them so that they chose Paul, Barnabas, and John.

These latter passed seven days in prayer and in meditation, and they fasted so that their bodies might be temples cleansed in every part and prepared for the fire of God. And on the tenth day Lucius, Manaen, and Simeon prayed over them, laid their hands upon them, and sent them forth upon their journey with the blessing and the supplications of the faithful at Antioch.

First these messengers of the Most High abode in Salamis, where Manaen had prepared men for the tidings of Christ. And there were many Jews in this town. So the field was wide, and these three did labour in it early and late, compelling men to hearken unto them, and ever drawing about them, when they spoke, the multitude, which was not of one race only, but merchants from distant lands, traders from the east and west, certain noble Romans, and even men from that land at the world's end which you now call Spain.

These were heathens of a simple mind who found it hard to understand the teaching of Christ, yet were they eager to believe, and they spoke privily with Barnabas and Paul, saying, " We hold this doctrine that ye teach no more than the river-bed holdeth and keepeth the water that cometh from the hills. Howsoever, we would serve your prophet and believe in the one God who is Three and yet One. For in our land we are troubled with many gods, and they give us little peace, sending us wars and sickness, famine and sorrow ; they are jealous of the joys of men, and they seek ever to rob us if there is abundance or a good harvest. Come, therefore, to Spain and drive out these gods, and set up this One God in Three who beareth but goodwill to men. We are weary of

these lean years and of the torment that cometh from these gods. If ye visit us they will flee before your Messiah as the darkness fleeth before the light."

And Paul promised that, when he was freed from his labours in the lands that were nigh to Judæa, he would bear the Word unto Spain, unto the world's end. But he strove to show them that the Lord might, out of His good will, at times send them lean years so that they might learn the truth through adversity. Of this teaching these men had little understanding, yet they departed in their ships with the sure belief that the Messiah was the one true and mighty God.

Strange were the thoughts of some of the barbarians when they first heard tidings of Christ. Yet they had more faith than many of the learned Jews and Greeks. For, as I have told you, a man's reason oft checketh and holdeth back the other part, which cometh from the Spirit.

After a time the three brethren determined to seek out the evil city of Paphos. It was many miles from Salamis, and was so much the harlot among cities that it had been destroyed by the quaking of the earth. For so great were the sins of the people that the Lord could no longer bear the sight of this town. It was builded once more, but it did not turn back from sinning. Once more did the evil spirits come about the dwellers in it, and their religion was evil; they worshipped a goddess who, it was said, had risen out of the foaming waves. Beautiful was she, and they made statues of her, and she had all that the eye of man lusteth after; she was beautiful outwardly, yet drew to her all that was evil.

And at certain seasons naked men and women did come in procession unto her, bearing her offerings, practising rites that were foul in the sight of God and man. And Paul was stirred to wrath when he perceived young men and women setting forth to worship Venus; and he passed among them, smiting this way and that, casting their offerings upon the ground, and crying out that the vengeance of God would fall upon this evil town if they continued thus to worship. He spake in haste, and did not in any manner choose the ordering of his words.

The people, bethinking them of the earth that was at one time riven, were afraid, perhaps thinking that here was no man, but a messenger from the gods, who would give them warning of evil that was coming. So they gathered about Paul and did him no ill, hearkening unto his words; and he spoke much with them, striving to sow the seed of the Word among these evil men and women. And Paul destroyed the little shapes of their goddess; he did not

smite the idol, for he chose to work with caution among them, seeking to win them unto Christ Jesus rather than to compel them to come unto Him. And so no man laid a hand upon these three saints, for they were feared by the people, and they spoke daily, wrestling with the Evil One for the souls of these men and women.

They did not seek to shape a Church among them, but they gathered certain of the Jews together, and these were gladdened by the tidings of the Messiah.

One morning, when Paul was preaching to the multitude, they opened out before Sergius Paulus, the Governor, who was passing by that way and desired to hear these strangers speak. He was a man of learning who had looked for God for many years, and he had some knowledge of the happenings at Jerusalem, for the daughter of the Roman who had been healed by Peter was of his kindred.

Now Paulus, as they called him, asked Barnabas or Paul to come into his house and speak with him further concerning the doctrine he preached. Here was a man of understanding, who could unravel the teachings of the Master and weigh and measure them. And he did perceive that they were in truth of the Spirit.

So Paul and he held speech with one another, entering into paths along which Barnabas might not follow them. They spake of the wisdom that was of Rome, they spake of the wise men of that city, who, in times past had studied the mysteries of life and of death, and had nothing to say concerning these that was of any real import. Sergius had turned from them, and, now that he dwelt in the East, he sought for the knowledge and the faith his own country could not furnish.

He had been with one they called a mage, who had shown him dark and evil wonders, and had been amazed by the power of the Invisible as manifested through this man. Yet he was, in the mind of Sergius, like a nut whose kernel hath rotted. He could not speak of any doctrine, nor could he shape in words the everlasting wisdom. And here was a strange man before him bearing that wisdom which is like no other, which is the firstfruits of the tree of life. For many hours Sergius sat at the feet of Paul, hearkening unto him earnestly and seeking with eager words to draw fresh truths from this stranger.

And when Paul was at last wearied, and ceased from speaking, the Governor cried out that he believed, and that he would be a follower of the Master, Christ. Then did Paul promise to baptise him on the morrow. And he gave him his blessing, and left his dwelling.

The sorcerer Elymas lived in Paphos. He was evil in all his parts, and not like the sorcerer of Samaria, whose powers the wicked or foolish spirits did play with, and thus make him at times

their servants. But Elymas practised the abominations that have ever been needful when man seeks to gain power through the invocations of Satan.

In that evil city there were certain young men and young women who were banded together and who wallowed in a slime whose practices served the mage for his own purposes. He would draw from it that power that evokes the Evil One to do man's bidding for a space, so that he may seize upon his victim at a later time and cause him to be slave, not master.

Now Elymas came in unto Sergius, and was greatly angered, for he had been in the procession of young men and women that had been scattered by Paul. And when he learned that the Governor believed in the words of this new prophet he mocked, saying that he was but one of the many Jews who sought proselytes among the Gentiles.

"This man thou callest Paul cannot show thee any marvel. He hath no wisdom. He may converse with the spirits. I will, if thou callest him unto me, confound him with the power that is within me. I will show him strange and fearful things that will bring dumbness upon him, so that he may cease babbling of his God. I will show him I am master."

Thus spoke Elymas. And Sergius, who had suffered through those evil spirits he had summoned in past times, became fearful, and was prepared to put from him the teachings of Paul.

It was therefore agreed that Sergius should lead the prophet to the house of the sorcerer, and there the issue between them should be determined, there would the hosts of dark and light contend.

So Elymas prepared himself at sunset. In the early hours of the day he had, through foul rites of which I will not write, gathered about him a cloud of evil. And, when the sun was gone, he uttered certain strange words and made strange signs, then called he Beelzebub to come out of the deeps unto him with his train of ghastly beings, upon whom no man who hath not the protection of the Most High may look and keep himself from being seized and rent by them.

At the appointed time Sergius entered into the chamber where stood the altar that was raised unto the prince of the air. Paul followed the Governor, and was prepared for the contention with the powers of Hell, for he had prayed that the Spirit might be about him in this hour, watching that no harm should come unto him.

There was a green light in the chamber, and nigh unto the altar there was dimness, which was like a veil of skin that did hide the lurking evil.

And lo! as Sergius sought to give greeting unto the mage, he was silenced, and a cloth was given him and he was bidden to hide his face and cover his head, for there were perils nigh unto him that were not of earth.

And all the time of waiting Paul spake not, for he felt the fighting in the air about him, and his soul was wrestling with the foulness that had been drawn up from Hell. The Governor withdrew the fringe only of the cloth from his forehead, so that his eyes might perceive, and he beheld such ghastliness that his whole body quaked. The shapes of evil had come out from the dimness of the altar, and they sought to entrap Paul, who stood there, silent and unstirred. For they could not break past the armour of the Spirit that was about him.

And they, being confounded, turned unto Sergius, and it came to pass that he cast himself upon the ground, foaming at the mouth. And he was possessed. The mage could not draw forth from him this foul being, though he strove to master it with signs and words, the sweat standing upon his brow, his body shaken as a ship by the winds of a tempest.

Paul bent down and stroked the head of the stricken Governor, saying: "Come out of him, and be gone for aye from this man. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I bid thee go."

And the evil thing went out of the man on that instant, as Saul had departed from the body of Paul at the command of Barnabas.

Then this brother in Christ turned unto the sorcerer, saying unto him: "Child of the Devil! O foul one! I do lay upon thee blindness for a season, not in vengeance, not in anger, but so that thou mayest be purged of the wickedness which is like unto a cloak of filth about thee."

In this manner spoke Paul. A darkness which was not of earth fell upon Elymas, and a mighty cry of woe was wrung from him, and from Beelzebub, who passed from the chamber and hastened from the presence of the Holiest of Holies. And there was a white light around Paul, that hung about him like a radiant shape without his shape.

Sergius, who now was whole and in his right mind, cast himself before the Disciple and cried out: "I believe in thy God, master. Take me hence. Save me from this evil that hath rent me, and hath nigh destroyed me and stolen my life. I am evil in thy sight, but spare me."

Paul would not permit him to speak further, saying: "Thou art ignorant, and not evil. Study the truth and gain wisdom, then wilt

thou be able to master the foulness begotten by Elymas the Sorcerer."

And Sergius did perceive the withered eyes of this man, and he knew in that hour that the Holy Spirit alone worketh marvels.

So he studied, and sought to learn all that was needful, that he might be baptised and become a brother in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XXX

HEROD'S DEALINGS WITH THE SECOND JAMES AND WITH PETER :
HOW THE ONE WAS SLAIN AND THE OTHER ESCAPED

Now Herod would gladly appear as some great one in the eyes of the people of Judæa, for he was a vain man and had little wit, but only this pride in his race and in his name.

He gave ear to Manaen, speaking him soft, and giving him to understand that he had but a few doubts concerning Christ, and, were these removed, he would then perhaps countenance His followers. So Manaen, in the innocence of his heart, revealed certain matters that should have been kept secret. He told of the community of saints, and he spoke of the Council of Twelve, of the Three within that Twelve who were in very truth the children of God, for they were at times filled with the Holy Spirit of the Most High. And Herod learned that James had the ordering of the community, and therefore was, in a manner, the first of the Twelve. Then came Peter, the preacher and the shepherd ; and lastly there was John the Dreamer, within whose soul was that glass everlasting which images the truth of the Most High.

Possessed of the knowledge he desired, Herod said to Manaen that he would consider this strange teaching, and perhaps summon him once again, if it were needful.

When Herod was with no man, he bethought him that he might now, if he seized upon these three men, find favour with the people. And yet was that not all. He, Herod, believed that the light was falling upon him, and that he would take the place of the Christ, whom these three men followed, and who, to his mind, sought this place for themselves. He would be the Messiah come to earth once more. But first must his soldiers lay hands on these three who sought to be gods in the eyes of the ignorant people.

It was the foolish thought of his mean soul that they believed themselves to be, in a manner, gods. So was he jealous.

There were two men known as James within the Church who were as like one another as two flowers on the one stem. But the second James was known to few, and but lately come into the Church. Yet was he zealous in the ministry, and, if he had not been puffed up and proud, he would have been chosen as a Deacon.

Now it came to pass that the servants of Herod sought for the chief of the Apostles nigh to the place of assembly, and they made known to one who served at the door their need ; and he sought out James who was not of the Twelve—who was the son, I am told, of Ephraim. This man did learn that Herod desired to speak with him concerning the teachings of Christ. And James was glad at heart. He would bring into the fold of the Church the Tetrarch, and thus would he show the Saints that he was as great a teacher as any who had been with the Master.

So did he bow himself low before Herod, and he chose honied words that would show the Tetrarch that the Church held his wisdom in high honour ; and this gladdened the heart of Herod. He rose up and cast about himself his robe, so that he was like some strange bird of many colours spreading out her wings in the sunshine of praise.

And Herod cried out : “ Am I not in truth the Chosen One, the Messiah ? Prate no more of your Christ, who was but a sorcerer and a knave ; who was rightly hanged upon a tree ! Bow the knee to the Son of God who stands before thee.”

Then he spoke with great swiftmess and eagerness of his desire that the whole Church of Christ in Jerusalem should turn to him as their Messiah, and should speak no more of Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter’s son.

It was in the mind of this seeker after folly that he might win James with words and promises, and cause him to declare unto his brethren that he had found the truth that Herod was god.

If he would not yield in this matter he would be done to death. And James, having hearkened unto the Tetrarch, perceived that he was beset with a great peril through his own vainglory ; yet was he glad that he might suffer ; that he could render testimony unto Christ, and, mayhap, lay down his life for his brother.

So he amazed this ruler by declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and by telling him that he had eaten of the bread of falsehood that would turn to gravel in his mouth ; and that he was the worst of sinners, for he had sinned against the Holy Ghost by declaring himself god.

Herod was angered beyond measure, and would have slain him on the instant, but he bethought himself of the people, and of the favour he might gain in their eyes if he made a public show of the dying of the chief of the Christian Church in Jerusalem. Thus it was that the multitude was gathered together, and a crier made known that the leader of the Twelve was to die, so that the curse which the malefactor Christ had laid upon the people might be removed. And this man, being asked if he was not James, the leader of the saints, made answer that it was so, and that he had been chosen as the chief among them.

Then the servants of Herod passed their swords through his body, and the people made a great shout as he yielded up the ghost, giving his life for his brother in Christ Jesus.

There was much stir in Jerusalem, and the people rejoiced at the death of James. "Now," said they, "the curse will no more be of avail. Our hunger will be relieved and the sickness will go from us. The Lord God of Israel was angry with His people because they permitted these men to set up a false Messiah."

And Peter was sought by the servants of the Tetrarch. He was preaching in the court of the Temple, so it was easy to seize him and take him to prison. He was brought before Herod, who still yearned to be hailed as the Messiah. He almost entreated Peter to call him god and fall down and worship him. Now Peter was tightly bound. He could not stir his limbs; only was his mouth free to offer up praise unto Herod. But, on the instant that he declared his faith in Christ, he was gagged and flung back into prison.

The people were pleased that he who was called the chief of the Apostles should so easily die. No sign or wonder had been wrought by him. Was not his life-blood still marking the stones as with the stain of wine? So it was held that the Powers Invisible had deserted the saints, and many assaulted them in the streets, and cast stones at them, and beat them; for were they not the cause of all the ill that had come unto the people?

Such was the common talk, and Herod, who had sought in vain for John the Dreamer, was content that there should be one living sacrifice, and that it should be made to his own godhead in the days following Easter.

It was his desire that this death should be a spectacle which should stir up all the passions of the beast in the hearts of the people. Then, when they were prepared through the exultation of perceiving this sorcerer—as some called him—slain, Herod would come forth in his robe of silver, and the crier, who had, it was said, the loudest voice in all the known world, would declare him god.

Of a surety the people would fall down and worship, and thus would the desire of the Tetrarch's heart be accomplished.

On the eve before this festival of death, Peter lay in a dungeon that was beneath the earth, and there were heavy doors that no man could stir between him and the light of the stars. He was hung with chains, for the tale of his opening of the doors of the prison for the Twelve had been noised abroad, and many guards were set about the prison ; and two watched beside Peter, who had not in his company the Twelve as aforetime.

Now I have spoken with you concerning this Body of Light, which is what I call the Image of the Man which is invisible. And it hath a covering that is in parts nigh unto the substance ye call flesh ; yet is it invisible also.

These two be of the inner nature of man ; and few may have dealings with them in the manner in which Peter dealt with them on that eve.

Now there be High Spirits who, as I have told you, may manifest themselves and wreak marvels upon your earth if they can find a shape which they may enter. Yet even more than this shape is needful. There must be an element that hath substance also ; that ariseth out of the yearnings of men, and out of their faith.

All the saints in Jerusalem were praying without ceasing that the Holy Ghost should send His messenger and give Peter freedom. Now there was one great yearning arising from many, and so mighty was it, it had this substance that draweth what is high to what is within the thickness of the earth. For ye are planted in what seemeth to the spirits as walls of stones, and are thus divided from them, and they can only through your aid come unto you.

The prayer of the saints drew the angel of the Lord unto Peter, who lay in what seemed a sleep ; yet was it a swoon. He had cast forth the Body of Light and its coverings ; so he lay as one dead, and his guards marvelled at the deepness of the sleep of one who was to die on the morrow.

There arose a mist about them, and there came a stillness about these guards as if they were far from earth. They were not in truth sleeping ; they were but stilled ; and about them was this circle of mist that caused them to be the loneliest of living men.

Now there appeared a star ; it spread until the whole of the shape that had been cast from Peter was illumined, and so it had the semblance of his bodily image, yet was there an angel within that did cause it to draw nigh unto Peter. And this High Spirit touched him, so that his other part should be roused and should cause his body to stir.

The chains were cleft ; the guards made no movement. Peter arose, and, because that element I have called the Image was not within and without his mortal shape, he was still as one who sleepeth and dreameth, and had no power over himself, the power being manifested through the great prayer and through the Body of Light that was now possessed by this High Spirit. The doors were opened through it, and it passed before Peter, beckoning him onward, and he followed as ye may follow strange paths in your sleeping hours.

When the light of the stars was about him, he roused himself a little from his dream and was as one bemused, when the angel, who now was fading slowly, passing out of its shell, passed before him, and, at the ending of a street, vanished.

It spoke unto Peter before that passing, and he followed the guidance of its words as a blind man follows the guidance of another's hand. He knocked at a gate, and knew not, in that strange time of bewilderment, that it was the gate of a house wherein the saints were gathered together praying for him with that sure faith which requires not an answer, for it knows the answer.

A young girl who was named Rhoda heard the knocking, and went to the door, and, after a space, it was opened. And Peter went in, and there was great exultation among the saints. Yet Peter silenced them, entreating them to make sure that James was surely hidden, so that Herod might not lay hands on him.

And Peter, before he departed from that house, sent word through a young man to the brother. For James had declared that, if Peter were slain, he would come forth and give himself up to Herod.

And Peter changed his robe, and shaved his head and his beard, darkening his cheeks so that no servant of Herod might know him, and he bore with him a sign which had been obtained by one of the saints. This, on being shown to the guard set at the gates of Jerusalem, caused them to let him pass, they believing he was one in authority.

When he was once without Jerusalem it was easy for him to find a sure place of hiding. And so it came to pass that, before the sun rose, the Twelve were scattered. They had found a sure place of keeping.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE DISCOMFITURE AND DEATH OF HEROD

Now will I speak of the sunrise and what was to have been the day of glory for Herod.

There still was darkness over the earth when Herod stirred in his sleep, and, opening his eyes, he heard what was like unto the tread of an animal. It seemed but a fancy, and he turned his mind to the pleasing imagery of himself, in his robe of silver, when he should appear unto the people after the slaying of Peter, and call on them to worship him as a god.

Now, after a short space, he arose and summoned a slave, who bore lights into the chamber and the robe Herod was to wear at the festival. For it was his fancy that he would look upon himself thus arrayed and hear the flattery of his servants. And he was well pleased when the light fell upon his robe, causing it to shine and casting about him a fair radiance.

And lo! as he gazed upon himself in the glass he perceived writing in the colour of blood upon parchment resting upon the table that was nigh him, and he read this writing, thinking it might contain verses written in his honour by some Scribe. Upon it there were set forth these words: "Woe unto thee, Herod. Enter into the rock, hide thee in the dust before the glory of the Lord, before the terror of His majesty. Fly into the desert places. Hide thy face, lest the wrath of God smite thee and give thee but thy share with the worms."

Then was Herod like unto a madman, tearing the parchment in many pieces, spitting on it, and then slaying the servant who had guarded his chamber door with his sword. The blood of his victim slaked his anger, and his chamberlain came unto him with many flatteries, persuading him that all was well, and that he would be hailed as one greater even than the Emperor of Rome, for he was a god, and but mortal in his outer form, in the clay about him.

Then, as the light was coming, Herod went into another chamber and was decked with majesty, so that he might in very truth feel the might of his kingship, as reflected in the glory of his robes.

And word was brought at that instant of certain men who were speaking in the court of the Temple to the people. Now these were of the kindred of James who had been slain by the servants of the Tetrarch. And they were declaring unto the multitude that James

was the son of Ephraim, that he was not one of the Twelve, and that the Tetrarch had caused innocent blood to be shed.

Before Herod could seek further tidings concerning this strange matter, one of the Elders, a member of the Sanhedrin, sought speech with him, and declared that he had but lately come to Jerusalem from Cæsarea, and had learned that his nephew was taken and done to death by the orders of the Tetrarch.

And this man proved to Herod that he spake the truth—that James was known to be the son of Ephraim, but that he was like James the chief of the Apostles, so had he been called one of the Twelve, and many had been deceived. Now Herod could make no answer to this charge, and was stirred once more to an anger that caused him to sweat and shiver, though it was as yet but early in the day.

The guards who had been with Peter lay stiff and still until the angel vanished, departing from the freed prisoner. Then these men roused themselves up, and were much amazed to find the broken chains and the empty dungeon. They summoned those who stood without, and these, also being roused, did protest that no man had passed their way, and that they had been wakeful and watching all through that night. They had no feeling that they had slept, yet could they find no sign of Peter—not even the marks of his sandals upon the dust of the road.

Time was passing, and the people were gathered for the slaying of Peter, for the festival of death. So word was borne unto the Tetrarch that Peter had been stolen away by night from the prison by armed saints. And one told one tale, and a second another. Herod could in no way learn the manner in which Peter had been freed. And he declared that the guards were in league with him and had loosed him from the prison. So were they to be the blood-offering to the people.

Then a great clamour arose from without the palace—hungry men and women calling, "Where is Peter? What is this tale of the angel that came unto him and released him from his bonds? What is the truth? Let us behold Peter. Give him unto us, if this be but a lying rumour." And the guards were led forth, and Blastus came unto the people in Herod's stead. For Herod was lying upon the floor of his palace foaming like a maddened dog, crying out and striking with his sword all who came nigh unto him.

And Blastus spake in this wise to the people: "The Christians came by night unto the prison and overcame the guard and loosed Peter from his bonds. Here are the men who in their cowardliness surrendered this prisoner. And they will take his place. Their

blood shall be shed, so that the wrath of the Lord may be stayed, so that He shall let the prosperous years come again unto His people."

And the multitude cried out that now in truth a miracle had been performed, and that perhaps God was on the side of the Christians. So the people hastened from that place, seeking certain of the Brethren who had come forth and who trusted the multitude, believing that they would guard them when they learned of the wonder of the night that was over.

The people hearkened unto them and believed, and they cried out that God was fighting for the saints and that Herod was striving against God. At the door of his palace many assembled, demanding bread, crying out, "Ye have given us a stone," demanding that Herod should come forth and declare that he had been deceived, and abase himself.

Then the guards dispersed the clamorous people and there was much tumult, blood flowing and many tears shed. Some of the people were slain and some wounded. And in this fashion was Herod's day of glory ended.

For a short space he lay sick upon his bed, and would speak to no man save Blastus. At night, when the people were sleeping, he departed privily from Jerusalem. Great was his anger and his shame, yet he perceived that the people were bitter and dark in their thoughts of him, so he, being a coward, chose not to remain in Jerusalem, but went into Cæsarea, where he abode for a space.

Always in his heart was there this unquenchable desire to be called a god. If he could but be praised and worshipped, then would he in truth be content. And the worm of his vanity gnawed at his soul ceaselessly, so that he could gain no rest, night or day. And he, who had been easy in his ruling, now practised many cruelties, and he threatened the people of Tyre and Sidon with massacres and with persecution if they did not pay him much treasure, and threatened to withhold all food from them, and, it being a time of leanness, they became greatly distressed, and they bribed Blastus, entreating him to appease the anger of the Tetrarch.

Now Blastus was cunning of speech, and he perceived the folly in the king's heart. So he went unto him and spake him fair, saying: "Master, there be many of the people who say that thou art god, and that also is my belief. Now honour is to be rendered unto Cæsar, and there are to be games and a great festival in this city for his sake. Thou shalt put on thy robe of silver and set thyself upon the high seat in the theatre, and the people, looking

upon thee and upon the wonder of thy countenance, shall forget Cæsar and hail thee as god."

And Herod, after many days of affliction, was pleased, exulting in the thought that the proud name of Cæsar should be abased and his own exalted in the presence of the people.

So when the day of the festival was fully come, he cast about him the robe of silver, which had not been worn by him since the day he had foamed upon the ground in Jerusalem. And now of a truth did he feel that he was the Messiah, the offspring of the Most High.

There were many Gentiles assembled in the theatre, scores of Romans, and there were people from divers nations, speaking in many tongues, waiting for the entry of Herod and his court, and also the representative of Cæsar who was to be humbled by the sight of a god. Blastus had bribed some hundreds to greet Herod with a holy name and to cast themselves upon the ground in worship. So when the Tetrarch appeared before the assembly, raising his hand to the people and taking his seat upon the throne, a great shout arose: "Hail, Herod, hail! O holy one! we worship thee and render thanks unto thee, for thou art god!"

And all save the Gentiles cast themselves on their faces, crying out, "In very truth he is a god! Behold the radiance that flasheth about him!"

And many who had not been bribed believed he was some Holy One because of the shouting, and because the sun's rays caused the robes of Herod to shine and give forth light. And, as these men uttered this monstrous blasphemy, Herod was smitten by the Most High. His whole body quaked and changed in colour and his face turned to a purple hue, and he fell backwards into the arms of Blastus, yielding up the ghost.

This slaying of Herod was a sign for all the generations, showing what is the end that cometh to a man who raiseth up his own image and setteth it as the idol in his heart.

In the death of Herod men may read the signs of their own mortality; so shall they not be puffed up or proud, knowing that their body returneth unto dust, and the Shape of Light, or what some have called the angel, entereth into the peace of a new life, which may endure as long as the earth endureth, but which leadeth, if they be pure in spirit, at a later time, into the presence of God.

THE SECOND PARCHMENT

THE SECOND PARCHMENT

CHAPTER I

THE ORDEAL OF BARNABAS AND MARK IN THE TEMPLE OF THE MAGI

I WOULD give you tidings concerning Paphos and of the strange evil that was practised in that city, fair to the eye but foul to the soul.

It was a spot accursed. And once in a far time God had smitten it and destroyed it by causing the earth to cast it forth into the sea. Then was it builded again by a Roman, because the earth and the sea were fair and it was in all things pleasing to the eye of man. In the time when Barnabas, Paul, and Mark made their descent into this abode of evil, many false gods were worshipped there ; but one was chosen from amongst all others. I speak of Aphrodite : the image of the Evil One as man sees him in the shape of a woman. In silver, in gold, the face of this goddess was graven. The young men carried her upon their breasts as a jewel, and many strange and secret sins were committed in her name.

So it came to pass that the Holy Spirit caused Paul and Barnabas and others of their company to seek out this harlot among the cities of the earth and strive with her, that she might receive the grace of God and the teaching of the Master Christ.

I have spoken of Elymas the Sorcerer. He was but one of many. For in Paphos there were gathered together the masters and their adepts, who had received from Egypt, from Chaldea, and the East the knowledge that giveth man power to employ the evil spirits and the dark desires of men.

Now these Magi dwelt in a certain street in Paphos, and went little abroad. But they sought from among the people of the town certain youths, whom they instructed in their art ; and Elymas was one of these. He had powers beyond the ordinary, and was not content to live among the Magi. With their consent he sought out the Proconsul and served him ; aiding him in divers ways, he also strove with subtle advice to draw from him treasure and power.

Elymas was but the tool of those that were greater in wisdom

and greater also in sin. These had harmed the people by their practices and through the invisible evil they had thus drawn to the city. It was not through open example or through display that they had made the town the mart of wickedness.

Therefore the Lord had appointed Paul as minister unto Paphos, and there was a purpose in the miracle of darkness which he had cast about Elymas. It was a sign to the men of evil, showing them that they were not to triumph and dominate the people through Sergius Paulus, as had been their desire.

The tale of the blinding of the sorcerer soon spread among the people; and the multitudes, hearing that their Governor believed in the teaching of Paul, gathered about him, hailing him as master; and some, at his bidding, cast from them the little images of the goddess, and besought the Disciples to show them the truth and the light.

So it came to pass that the hosts of evil were roused by the destruction of the image of their corruption, and gave secret counsel to the masters. It was determined by them that they should tempt the servants of the Lord in divers strange and subtle ways.

They feared Paul, for he had shown that he could read the minds of men, and he had shown the might of the spirit in his victory over the sorcerer. They said: "He is a greater master than we are; he hath secret ways of calling up the devils, and we may not gainsay him. But we will turn the people from him by setting snares for those who are his followers." So their hirelings went by night and took with them Barnabas and Mark, pretending that their ministrations were needed by the sick without the town.

Now, within a temple of the goddess, these evil men celebrated their faith in her presence at night-time, when the gates of the temple were closed. There were chambers beneath the place of worship, beneath the earth. To these Barnabas and Mark were led, where the vengeance the masters dared not wreak on Paul had been prepared for them. Barnabas and the young man Mark were put in bonds; and they who were Jews were compelled to witness sacrifices of flesh made unto idols, and meat, forbidden by the Jewish law, was thrust upon them. The blood of unclean beasts was given them to drink, and they were cast upon the steps of the altar and compelled to bow themselves before the goddess.

Their tormentors did not weary of evildoing. Having mocked and spat upon the Brethren, they raised them up and set them at a board—in their bonds, without power to move their limbs. Crowns were set upon their heads, and women came tempting them, and the masters made mock of them, calling to them to adjure their

prophet, and to feast and dance with these women. For, if they would not, if they held fast to their faith, then would their eyes be torn from them, and they would be tormented till they yielded up the ghost. They were given the choice of denying their Lord or dying for Him after bitter anguish. They would not yield, and when their lips were freed they sought but to bear testimony unto the Lord, and to preach His word even in that temple of abominations. Mark, being young and of a weakly frame, was the first tormented, and Barnabas was a witness of the suffering of the one among the Disciples he loved even more than Paul. The sweat of anguish was his also, though his body was still whole. Then he cried unto the Lord, for he saw that Mark was failing, and that his soul might yield to the grievous torment of the flesh. So great was the might of his prayer and his crying that all those in the hall—the masters and their women and their youths—were hushed and stilled. And Mark, whose soul was about to deny our Lord Jesus, repented, and, when his lips were freed, did join in the prayer of Barnabas.

Then were these two bound, and they were told that they should no more look upon the light of day, for their eyes would be pierced and they would be cast from the temple of the goddess unto the people, as a sign that her might was greater than that of the Messiah.

And lo! as the youths gathered about the Brethren, the earth shook, and the floor of the temple was riven, the pillars were smitten asunder, and darkness fell upon the people. In that night there was naught but the crying of stricken men and the weeping and wailing of women. Those who were not slain fled from the temple. Barnabas and Mark remained, not stirring, praying for the sins of these people, and thanking God for the miracle that had been wrought through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER II

THE DARK HOUR OF MARK AND THE MIRACULOUS HEALING OF ELYMAS

WHEN the dawn broke, Barnabas and Mark were the only watchers in the temple, and they saw about them the broken pillars and the altar that was riven asunder.

Nigh to it the goddess lay upon her face. And in that cold hour Mark was stricken with the fear of the evil that was overpast. He

strove to join in prayer with Barnabas, but no words would come ; and he was shaken as the leaf is shaken by the wind. The blood gushed from the wounds in his body ; for his flesh had been torn with sharp weapons by the youths during the second watch of the night, before the Lord had sent the sign of His presence in answer to the prayer of Barnabas.

And the elder drew the younger to him, bearing him from the temple to the house of Merab, a devout woman and a sister in Christ. There was Mark tended, and sweet ointments laid upon his wounds. And Barnabas returned unto the temple. And great was the wonder in his soul ; for no dwelling in Paphos had been smitten. Only about the temple was the earth rent and mighty rocks had been cast up from the depths beneath.

There Barnabas, in the lonely hours of the dawn, wrestled with the invisible evil that was about that sanctuary of Satan. He cried unto the Lord, entreating him to have mercy on all the souls in Paphos, and to drive from it the evil spirits that had been summoned by the Magi, and were in hosts about that city, ever tempting the generations of men with new and strange pleasures, showing unto them the fruits of evil and the foul dreaming of the Prince of the Air.

Thus in prayer did Barnabas seek to save the soul of a whole people. And, when at last he ceased, his body worn, his whole being preyed upon by the enemies about him, he perceived upon the face of the sea, where it lay smooth and still nigh the shore, the image of a future time, and saw that he had won and lost—for such is ever the tale of man's strivings after the light.

For many years to come would men worship the Evil One in Paphos ; yet would many turn from them and be baptised into the faith of our Lord Christ. No miracle of healing would be wrought in the minds of the people. They would worship God and praise Him and then there would be backsliding and they would turn again to the old foul rites and the practice of strange evil.

And Barnabas went from the Temple heavy of heart, for he had believed that, after this wondrous sign, all men in that island would believe in the truth and the light. But when he had come to the city he perceived a multitude that was gathered in the market-place, making no loud talk, the men and women whispering one to another.

And they looked upon Barnabas and cast themselves on their faces, crying out, "Behold the worker of wonders!" "Behold the hero that hath arisen from the sea!" And they would have prayed unto him. But he entreated them to hold their

peace, telling them that he was but a servant of the one true God, who had smitten the earth so that men in Paphos might believe.

And all cried out that they believed, for fear was in every heart. And Barnabas, gaining new strength through the visitation of the Spirit, taught the people ; speaking of John, who came as a witness to Christ, and speaking also of the resurrection of the body, and of the appearing of Jesus after His burial in the tomb.

On that day hundreds believed and were baptised in Paphos, and Elders were appointed. All the common people praised God, whose Word had been borne to them through Paul and through Barnabas. And some among them called Barnabas the Shaker of the Earth.

And years after he had left them, some who had heard of him as youths made an image of this brother, and, calling it a god, worshipped it, praying to it when the earth was dry and the fruits of the ground were scorched from want of rain, or when the earth again menaced to open at their feet.

In secret they worshipped him whom they called The Shaker of the Earth. But these worshippers were ignorant men. And one of the Brethren appointed to the charge of the Church at Paphos learned of this strange belief, and went among these people, destroying the image of Barnabas, which was not in his likeness, and the vain imagining of these men who walked in darkness.

Now Paul and his company abode many days in Paphos and they were well served by the Proconsul ; and the Jews who abode there made no clamour against them, for they feared Paul. And so the Church prospered in those first days. And it was determined that they should go unto Perga, in Pamphylia, where the Word of the Lord had not yet been spoken.

Mark lay sick of a fever that came to him through the evil that had corrupted his wounds after those hours of torment in the temple. In those days, when his body was ailing, his mind was caught as a bird within the net of the fowler. This net was the foul images cast forth by the Magi in their wrath against the Brethren. These might not pierce the veil that guardeth a whole man ; but they entered within the mind of this youth who was subject to the humours of his feeble body. So it came to pass that the images of lust abode with him in the darkness of his sickness. They were monstrous as the cruelty of the ancients, and they gathered about the nephew of Barnabas, tormenting him so that he cried out that he was possessed by devils and that God had forgotten him. And the company of the Brethren prayed for him.

It was his time of trial, and, therefore, the Spirit came not to give him ease or to help him to endure.

For there are days in each man's life when, like Christ in the wilderness, he standeth alone ; and it seems to him in that dark hour that God has turned His face from him and given him up to Satan and his hirelings.

Barnabas believed that Mark would pass thus from his body, crying out with foul names upon his lips in his dying. He knew not that Mark had been chosen for a special purpose, and that the light of his soul was but dimmed for a short space by these shapes of evil.

When the fever had abated, his spirit returned, and once more gained governance over his body, and it, being young, became whole, so that to the Brethren and to Paul he seemed ready once more for his appointed work, which was the baptising of those who believed in the Word that was preached to them by the two Elders.

Mark feared the return of the evil that had beset him, and he sought out certain of the Brethren, counselling them to turn back upon the road and speaking of the needs of the Church at Jerusalem. And they went unto Paul and prayed him to let them go, as Mark was minded.

Having that sight that pierceth the inner man, Paul perceived that these Brethren were fulfilling the desire of Mark. So he spoke to them sternly, saying, " Ye seek to deceive me. Ye speak of the sore needs of the Disciples at Jerusalem, and ye would make it the cause of our turning back from the wilderness and from the places where God is not yet known. Oh, ye hypocrites ! ye seek to please this young man whom ye love."

And they cast down their eyes, saying, " This is true. Mark desireth us to urge thee to go no farther, and there is reason on his side ; but we will not desert thee if thy choice is to continue the spreading of the light among the Gentiles." And they were all afraid of Paul, and agreed to follow him, for the might of his spirit was great in those violent days at Paphos, where he ceased not from teaching and preaching.

So these younger Brethren spake unto Mark saying that it was not the will of the Spirit that they should go unto Jerusalem. And for a time Mark held his peace, yet he was beset by fears that came again to him in the night-time in the shapes that had visited him when he lay nigh unto death. For him there was no ease, only the sore fret of a mind that dreadeth the loneliness of the dark when Hell openeth out of it.

Now Paul and Barnabas took counsel one with another, and they

determined they would cast loose from Paphos and go unto Perga. And so, in the mart of that city, nigh unto the temple where the goddess was no longer worshipped, he gave unto the people his last prayers for the Church and his last exhortation.

The temple of the Evil One was empty in that hour, and all the people came together to hear this worker of wonders and to gaze upon his brother, whom they had named the Shaker of the Earth. And one of the Magi stood up and questioned Paul, and strove to dispute with him, and with mockery to cast derision upon his teachings, so that the people would turn again to sin and seek laughter and feasting and the strange evil of those days. But Paul rebuked him, saying laughter that is foul is the enemy of God.

Then the master contended with him concerning the powers of the Holy Spirit, and boasted that he, the wise one, could work miracles which the followers of the God of Judæa could not imagine or in any way cause to come to pass. At that instant the crowd broke before a man who stumbled and besought them to lead him to the High Priest of the God of Judæa. This was Elymas who saw but nigh about him, and feared with all his soul the power that had smitten him.

Paul cast his eyes upon him and bade those about him to lead the stricken one to the master; for he, being a worker of mighty miracles, would surely heal the blind man and make him whole once more in the sight of all the people.

And the master sought to call up the demons, whispering words, making signs, and anointing the face of Elymas; but the blind man, raising his head, cried out, "This is not the prophet. I see not. Ye have deceived me, ye men of Paphos. Lead me unto the worker of wonders, and peradventure he will have compassion and grant me the sight of my eyes."

Then the master rent his clothes and called yet again upon his demons, and all the crowd was hushed, watching for the miracle that should come out of this fury; but naught came of it. And yet again Elymas besought Paul to have compassion on one who was ignorant, for he knew only evil and the foul secrets of the ancients. So it came to pass that the Spirit moved Paul to lay his fingers upon the eyes of this fool. And lo! as the Disciple exhorted him to see, not only with the eyes of the flesh, but with the eyes of the Spirit, he cast back his head, and, turning him about, cried unto the people: "Behold! A cloud of light! Behold, it is day! The mist passes! I see you, my brothers! I am whole, and I believe in the God that this man worships and in Christ, His Son, for in my darkness the truth was given unto me."

CHAPTER III

DISSENSION LEADS TO THE CAPTURE OF PAUL AND HIS COMPANY BY
ROBBERS : THEY ARE SET AT LIBERTY

THROUGH the raising up of Beelzebub by the Magi the people were once more led astray, and gave themselves over to the abomination of these evil men. And these sought out the Priests of the old worship, and showed them how they might win the people back to evil through the lusts of the body, while they, the Magi, drew once more about the city the hosts of spirits that served them; and these spirits entered into the minds of the people, so that they waxed gross in their desires and turned away from Christ.

Yet there was always a community of saints in that town, and no foul image cast at them by the Magi might enter within their radiant bodies and wrestle with the Spirit for mastery.

I would write now of Mark and of the dispute that arose between him and Paul.

This was caused by the subtlety of the Evil One who served the Magi. He drew about Mark strange shapes of fear, making, as I have told you, a terror of the night hours for him. And Paul was angered with his brother because of the weakness of his flesh and because he, who dreaded the perils that lay before them in Perga, sought to turn the Brethren back upon the road.

When the company were nigh to Perga, Paul rebuked him for the discontent he had bred in the hearts of his Disciples, and Mark made answer, saying : " We of Judæa are of the chosen race. It is not meet that we should give all our lives and our labours to the Gentiles, who know naught of God. There are many of our own people who have not heard the Word. Let us go up to Jerusalem and minister unto them."

And Paul answered him saying : " Thou liest, brother, unto thyself, as well as unto me. Thou art caught in the evil imaginings of these sorcerers. Thou hast surrendered thyself to Beelzebub."

In truth Paul spoke in haste, not measuring his words, nor reckoning with the frailty of this youth, who was still worn and spent because of the torments he had suffered in the temple.

At that hour Perga was nigh and they could perceive the sea and the ships. And Mark declared unto the Brethren that he would return unto Jerusalem, to the chosen people of Jehovah.

And he called on the young men to follow him and to seek the Gentiles no more. But not one among them stirred. And Mark

went from out the midst of them and sought his mule to bear him to the sea.

This dispute caused dissension among the Brethren. And it came to pass that some among them would not be gainsaid by their elders, and determined to preach the Word as they were minded, seeking thus to be first when they were but fitted to be last.

All this had been brought about by the masters of evil, who now were far from them, yet who could cleave the spaces of the sea and come before them arrayed in the images of the mind.

But not so in the heart of Paul. After the first stirring of anger against Mark he surrendered no more to these messengers of evil, but was calm, like the waters of a pool in the still hour of dawn. Not with upbraidings but with earnest exhortation he sought to make the Brethren once more work in unison, warning them that punishment would fall upon them if they yielded to their passions and to their jealousy, for they even questioned the leadership of Barnabas and Paul.

And the two Elders, having taken counsel with one another, judged it not seemly to show themselves in Perga in this wise, bearing messages of peace and goodwill, when goodwill reigned not among those who would spread the tidings of our Lord Christ.

Now certain of the Brethren who would not be guided desired to go unto Antioch. This was through stubbornness and rage, because they knew that Paul desired to remain in Perga, lighting there the torch of truth.

They were, therefore, greatly amazed when he agreed with them, saying: "I shall, as ye will it, accompany you unto Antioch, for here we may not be few, if we are to teach and preach. Ye are young and foolish as the ass who strayeth from the path into the wilderness and is there beset by wild beasts. Ye will rue this journey, but let ye not be stayed by me. I will go with you, so that I may call upon the Spirit when ye are in need."

And the young men heeded him not, for they believed in the wisdom of their youth, and they set forth, leaving no man of their company behind them.

It came to pass that when night descended upon them they were far from men and from any shelter. They lay upon the side of the mountain and sought rest in the hollow of the mighty rocks. This country was named Pisidia, and it was lonely and empty of honest men. Only the wild beasts and those who had been banished from the towns lived in such bare land.

Robbers, who dwelt in the caves among these hills, came upon the Brethren as these slept. Thinking them to be merchants, they

slew some and put the others in bonds, bearing them to the caves in the hills, where no man might venture if he would save his body alive. The robbers had often seized those who had great possessions, and it was their custom to demand sums of gold for their prisoners.

Now, some of the young men were wounded and others lay dead in the hollow of the rocks. Those that remained whole were fearful and sorrowful, all their vainglory gone from them. They desired no more to be first, and were glad to listen to the words of Paul and Barnabas and again to call these two master.

The captain of this band of robbers was of Antioch, and he questioned the leaders of this merchant company, as he deemed them, threatening that, if their kin did not pay tribute for them, he would have them bound by the arms and hung above fires in the caves until they were prepared to surrender up their moneys.

And in that time of peril Paul spoke boldly unto these men, saying: "We have no moneys, neither have we kith nor kin. Naught do we possess of earthly riches. We are but pilgrims bearing with us the tidings of the coming of the Messiah, of the coming of God to earth."

So mighty was the power of Paul when the Spirit possessed him that these wild men let their fires fall to ashes, and hearkened unto him hour after hour, only breaking in upon his words with questions when their understanding failed them.

Paul spoke of the God of Judæa and of His prophets who had spoken of the coming of Christ; then of his teaching, the rendering of love one to another, and the presenting of the other cheek when one had been smitten.

The captain of the robbers made great mock of this, declaring that no prophet would prevail upon him to yield to the smiter. Yet was he strangely stirred at the tale of the rising from the tomb of the Master Christ, and at his teachings among the publicans and sinners, the poor and the outcast. And he saw that, of a truth, these men were not like the wanton pagan priests, and sought not the pleasures of the world, but were the friends of the outlaws, and their God had power through them to forgive evil, and, it might be, pour down blessings on those that respected His chosen.

So the robbers, perceiving that these Brethren were in rags and had no sign of wealth upon them, determined, for the sake of Paul and Barnabas, to loose them and all their company.

"It is our custom to ask a price from those that we bear to the caves," he said unto Paul. "From some we have obtained naught save the joy of witnessing their torment in the fire; from others we have received much gold. But from you we ask neither gold nor

silver ; we ask for the blessing of your God, and that ye will beseech Him to keep for us a fair place in this life to come of which ye speak. For here have we suffered ; from the fair cities have we been cast out, and our lot is to dwell but secretly at times in the low streets of towns, or to suffer hardship upon these mountains. Obtain for us, if ye will, a share in that Kingdom of Heaven of which ye speak and we will let you and your people go."

Then Paul drew the captain apart, and all that night he wrestled with him for the possession of his soul, striving to cast light upon his darkness and to show him there could only be a place found for him if he truly repented and turned from evildoing.

And the captain was much moved, and cried out that he would give up all and follow Paul, he would suffer persecution with him and testify unto the Master. But, when day was come, this wild man looked out upon the hills, and he bethought him of the prison and the stripes that would be his at Antioch for past evil deeds, if he went with Paul and sought to serve him. And desire in his heart grew cold, his courage failing him, for he knew his own weakness, and that he could not give up his wild life and the joys of its evil ways.

So, having withdrawn himself for a short space, he bade the robbers cut the thongs that bound the prisoner, and he addressed himself unto Paul, saying, "I may not go with thee. Tempt me no more with thy God, who, though He be true, would lead me to a death of anguish. I cannot give thee what thou askest of me. Yet thou shalt be the first man who hath entered these caves from whom I shall ask no price. Go in peace with thy Brethren, but come not again to scald my heart with thy tales of this great prophet ; for I cannot surrender unto Him this free life of mine, nor may I submit to His yoke. Leave me to my evil ways."

And Paul wept for him, and blessed him, bidding him in his dying to pray unto Christ ; for Paul perceived that, when the last quarter of the moon was passed, this man would be taken and would die in torment. So they parted one from the other, and went forward into the mountains, a great silence about them, Paul praying for this sinner who had not repented, and would mayhap be lost to the fold.

CHAPTER IV

THE VISION OF THE YOUTH WHO WATCHED PAUL IN PRAYER ON THE HILL ABOVE ANTIOCH

Now some of the Brethren had suffered hurt, and they were sick and fevered, so that the company must needs tarry by the way, days and nights, striving to travel but a little distance, and then staying their course, so that ease might be given to these young men.

It came to pass that their food failed them, and they must needs nourish themselves with herbs and berries, and drink from the springs in the hills. And some among them besought Paul and Barnabas to leave those who had been smitten by the robbers, and with all haste to seek out Antioch, where the field was ripe for the harvest. In these lonely mountains were wild beasts, and, if they tarried thus and were weakened by hunger, they might be assailed and devoured, for the Brethren were not skilful hunters, but men of peace and of the towns.

And Paul prayed unto the Lord that faith might be given to His Disciples, and after the prayer was ended he spoke with them, saying that he would not desert even the most froward among them, nor would he leave them thus to the beasts in the wilderness.

Their faith being feeble, they might be devoured. But, while their shepherds abode with them, they need fear neither hunger nor thirst, nor fevers, nor the evil of living creatures. The fire of the Lord was about them each night as they slept, and no evil thing might break through it. No member of that band laid eyes upon that flame of which he spoke, yet they were comforted by it, and slept as if in truth they were within the fold.

On the eve of the Sabbath the Brethren came unto a high hill. And lo! at the feet of it lay the white town of Antioch, and it was fair in their eyes, and like the jewels in a crown, as the sun bade it farewell, passing slowly into the dimness of the night.

Then some made fires, and others sought to tend the sick, and Paul drew apart, so that he might commune with the Spirit to obtain guidance for the feet of his children on the morrow. There was silence and stillness about Paul as he knelt and prayed, and the youth who served him watched that no one might come nigh unto him in this hour of the Spirit.

And it came to pass that the eyes of the youth waxed heavy, while the eyes within opened unto that other day which is near you and about you, though ye cannot perceive it because of your earthly

sight. And this youth slept not ; his mind was swift as the eagle in those hills, and it perceived that Paul rose up in the company of Barnabas, turning unto the bright clear light of the sun. For all was changed ; the dimness gone from among those rocks, and Paul was still but a dark figure kneeling, and yet again was he with his face turned to this clear light—two men, one in the shadow of the evening, the other in the whiteness of the morning.

And as he who stood in that other and clearer day praised God for His mercies, there came a lion out of the rocks and leaped at him, and for a space these two wrestled with one another, and the youth might not aid him, for he was without that clear day, and he could not stir in any limb.

And lo ! as Paul strove with the lion, Barnabas laid hands upon it, and together these two cast the beast from them, dealing it such hurt that it fled into the wastes and was no more seen by the watcher. But there was no peace for Paul. As he opened yet again his mouth in praise, there came to him the fiery flying serpent that lurketh in the hot sands, that dealeth out death to man.

This time was Paul sorely pressed, for the creature had power to cast at him his foul poison, and was mighty in the strength of his winding body, which menaced destruction, and, as the struggle continued, it seemed to crush Barnabas, who was close to Paul in this strange hour.

Yet again did these two triumph, casting the fiery flying serpent from them. And, when it had hidden among the rocks, there was once more peace, and, for the third time, Paul sought to praise God and give thanks unto him.

And lo ! there rose from out the ground a dark creeping thing that struck at the heels of the Brethren, and it was a viper that had lain in the grass, hidden from the sight of the two. It pierced, and as it struck and its poison entered into those on whom it preyed, the clearness of that bright day faded, darkness not like unto any night on earth fell upon that wasteland.

The youth heard the voice of Paul, and he perceived his brother still praying and communing with the Spirit. But Barnabas was not there, nor was there any sign of that other Paul who had stood in the clearness of the day. The moon shone upon the mountain, casting upon it shadow and light. And lo ! the eyes of the youth's body saw once more, and those within were closed, again caught in the slumber of the inner man.

Then Paul rose up and gave greeting to the youth. He perceived that his watcher had something of strange import to tell him. And in that hour knowledge of this vision was given unto this young man,

and he told Paul of all that he had witnessed, and of the interpretation of these three foul creatures that had fought with him.

“The lion, the fiery flying serpent, and the viper are three men of good report thou shalt meet in Antioch, and they will speak thee fair. Yet will they seek to do thee hurt when they learn that thou bearest tidings of the Messiah to all men and choosest not from among them, but seekest out the humblest and those of small repute.

“And these three will strive to drive thee forth from Antioch. Two wilt thou triumph over, but the third shall by secret ways prevail. This have I seen, and this I do know.” The youth besought Paul to turn his face away from Antioch, and go unto another city where the word of Christ would prevail.

And Paul made answer, “It is but meet that we should fail in Antioch, for so the Spirit will have it, that we may learn humbleness of heart, that we may learn to dwell in unison. If I be expelled from Antioch, I shall rejoice, knowing that this humiliation is sent unto us so that we may be tried. The triumph of evil, brother, leadeth unto the victory of the Spirit, as surely as the hanging of the Master Christ upon the tree did lead unto the glory of His resurrection. Speak of what thou hast seen to no man, for this is a true sign, and the Brethren may not know of it, for they are still weak in spirit and somewhat far from the grace of God.”

Then Paul gave the youth his blessing, and bade him sleep and forget what he had seen in that other clearer day. For the Word of the Lord must be accomplished and all fulfilled as He spake through His prophets in the olden times.

CHAPTER V

THE HOSTILE ELDERS OF ANTIOCH : PAUL AND BARNABAS PREACH IN THE SYNAGOGUE

Now tidings of the coming of the Brethren had travelled to Antioch, and there were many strange tales concerning them spread abroad among the Jews who dwelt in that city.

It was said that Paul, a learned man, who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem and learned much from him of the ancient wisdom of the Temple, had become one of the new sect of the Christians,

and that he had the keys to a strange knowledge that was given him by great prophets that had arisen in Judæa.

The tales of his acts and of the acts of the Apostles were much confused, and they had the substance of truth and the substance of lies within them ; so that the Rulers of the Synagogue scarce knew what they might believe, and what they should cast out from their minds. For it is a hard thing to sift the truth and separate it from what is false when it be borne in travellers' tales from afar.

Yet there was in Antioch one who had some knowledge of the happenings at Jerusalem, and he of all men held his peace, telling no tales, biding his time, so that he might perceive the web these Christians would weave about the people of Antioch. And the man was named Nahor, and he was little and dark and one of the Rulers of the Synagogue.

There were two others who ruled with him and had authority over the Elders among the Jews in that city. One had yellow hair, and he was like unto the Lion of Judah. Such was the talk of the people. And the other was grey-haired, and quick in speech. He toiled night and day, seeking, when the work of his trade was ended, to bring unto the Lord God of Israel those heathens that dwelt in great numbers at Antioch. He was zealous for his faith, and desired to draw all men unto the beliefs of his fathers and to nourish them upon the law of Moses.

And the first, who was likened unto the lion, and was named Abishail, was a zealous man who delighted in rites and observances, and loved to hear his own voice sounding in the Synagogue as he expounded the Scriptures and gave of his learning to the ignorant people.

These two Rulers had gone much among the Romans, and had caused some of them to believe in the God of Judæa, and had admitted some of them into their faith, circumcising them, and thus making many proselytes, who gave of their moneys to the Synagogue and certain privileges to the Jews.

Thus it was that these two Rulers welcomed Paul and Barnabas, deeming that Paul, being learned, would win others of the heathen, causing them to believe in the commandments and the laws given by God unto Moses on Mount Sinai. They knew that Paul bore with him some new truth concerning the interpretation of the Prophets, and they were glad at heart.

For they said unto themselves : " This teacher from Jerusalem, who has come to us from Antioch and Cyprus, will tarry with us but a short space, and when he has given of his wisdom to the people, and is gone hence, then shall we reap the harvest of it among

the people, and mayhap among the Romans ; for this man hath knowledge of them and is of that citizenship."

Now the third Ruler, Nahor, outwardly worshipped the Lord God of Israel, but inwardly he was given over to vanity and to the worship of his own being. He desired to be first in the Synagogue and first among men, so he sought with many strategies to gain power, that he might rule in Antioch, and yet not be known as its ruler.

He had but little knowledge of the law of Moses and of the wisdom that passeth from one generation to another among those who are first in the Synagogue. Yet he had knowledge of the means whereby man is ruled and guided ; and he, being one that could speak with honied words, could by craft win those who seek after flattery.

He was sought out by the wives of the Magistrates in Antioch, and they were guided by his counsels and instructed their husbands as to the rules of the religion of the Jews.

So Nahor was possessed of much secret power, and he drew these good women to him by speaking of the only true faith, which was belief in the Lord God of Israel and in His Prophets. These women had tired of the many gods of Rome, for they said truly, " If we propitiate one, we may anger another. And this great God of whom Nahor speaketh is of good report, and appears to be mighty in power. We will believe on Him, and win our kin to that belief."

Thus it came to pass that Nahor was much favoured by these women, and he was oft-times among them. But he was not content, for he was third in the Synagogue, and ruled by the commands of the two Elders.

And he sought to be the chief among them, so that he might remain the wise man and counsellor to the devout women through whom it was his purpose to rule in Antioch. And he was glad at the coming of Paul and Barnabas, for he thought that these men might make division among the Rulers, or show their wisdom to be but a shallow pool in the hour of disputation. Then would he, Nahor, prove himself to be chief among them, and in the sight of the women win the crown of wisdom.

It was in his mind that he would stand with Paul and hold with him in word and deed, turning thus upon the first and second Rulers, who were set in their beliefs, and held to the rites and observances that had been given to them by their fathers.

Nahor had heard Peter preach the Word, and he had witnessed some of the miracles of healing that had been wrought in those days that followed Pentecost, when the Jews of many nations were gathered together at Jerusalem.

There arose in the mind of this man a vision of himself as the chief of the Church in Antioch—a Church fashioned by these strangers; and that he might be, when he had learned the secrets of these Christians, as great a teacher and a wonder-worker as Peter, and all men would bow down to him and yield him obedience in Antioch. Such was the vain dream of the cunning fool.

So he spake the Brethren fair when they entered into the city in the valley, and he gave them housing, and, in company with other members of the Synagogue, also shelter to those who were afflicted by the hurts dealt out to them by the robbers.

When the Sabbath Day was fully come, the first and second Rulers held converse with Paul and Barnabas, and asked them to tell of the new wisdom and the new interpretation of the Prophet, which it was reputed had been spread abroad in Judæa.

And Paul rose up in the Synagogue, where there was a great assembly of Jews and proselytes, and he was careful in his speaking, for first he gave unto those who hearkened the chronicle of the chosen people of the Lord, showing that, from the days of Moses, they had been set apart for a purpose by the Most High.

Many times had they strayed from the ways of truth, yet had there risen up among them the stem of Jesse, and from this stem had sprung David, who had been the first of his race to know that one who would spring from him should not see corruption, but would conquer death through his Body of Light.

And he showed how David, in all the bloom of his days, yearned to know this mystery, whereby a son of man should live the life of men, and yet, in his ending, not know the corruption that is the lot of all the sons of Adam. And David sought in vain, and the wish of all his years was not granted unto him. But to one who had sprung from his stock was it given, and through Him was witnessed by many the redemption of the body. So that the Scriptures were fulfilled when it was written: "Thou shalt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."

And Paul testified unto Christ, speaking of His teachings, and of how He had been reviled and persecuted and hanged upon a tree. But, when Paul spoke of the mystery of the resurrection of the body, the first Ruler, he that was known as the Lion, was roused to anger, and he disputed with the stranger; for he would not permit that such teaching as the rising of the body and the belief in the everlasting life should be given in the Synagogue to an ignorant people.

He was at heart a Sadducee, but did not talk openly of this belief

in the Pit and in the quenching of all light and life in the everlasting death.

And Paul spoke out boldly, for he would not be silenced, nor would he be gainsaid, and Barnabas followed him, speaking of the Master Christ as being in very truth the Son of God, who could forgive sins, and had redeemed him from the death everlasting through the sacrifice upon the cross.

And those that hearkened in the Synagogue were greatly moved, and they cried out when the Ruler sought to still the voice of this teacher and sought to disperse the assembly. Then this man was much angered, and he showed such bitterness in his speech that the people demanded that he should go forth or be silent.

So he went from the Synagogue, and Paul and Barnabas continued in their teaching, showing how God had taken on flesh and lived among men and died for them, so that they should not be utterly destroyed, cast into the Pit, but that they might rise on that last day, and find peace and the life that God had prepared for those that believed on Him and loved Him.

CHAPTER VI

THE GENTILES FAVOUR THE PREACHING : THE DESIGNS AND JEALOUSY OF NAHOR ARE REPROVED BY PAUL

Now the Rulers of the Synagogue had certain powers, and they might have removed from this Holy Place those that were not of good conduct, and some of these might be scourged if they sorely offended. But, on this day, when the strangers taught, there was gathered within the Synagogue a great concourse of Jews and Greeks and certain Romans.

Many of these were proselytes, and they were eager to hear the tidings of the prophet who had borne unto the earth the pure knowledge of the life to come, a life that might be for all who repented of their sins and obtained forgiveness through the Son of God, who had taken on Himself the likeness of man and lived among the poorest and the humblest of the people.

So it came to pass that these proselytes were greatly stirred, and, being secretly guided by Nahor, they made such disturbances that the first Ruler of the Synagogue, who had desired to put these

strangers out, was, for the sake of peace, compelled, with certain of his following, to leave the place of worship, so that he might not hearken to what was an offence and bitterness to him.

And Paul, after Barnabas had ceased, continued speaking, saying: "We be not working against the law of Moses, as one among you has alleged, though we hold that through Christ all things are justified, but not so through the law of Moses. He was the first. And, as ye know, in springtime first there is the root, then cometh the branch, which was John, who bore unto us the baptism of repentance, and after that was the flower, which is Christ; and from Him cometh the seeds of a great Church, which shall not be for one nation only, but also for the heathen, for the Gentiles who have not known God.

"And there shall be no superior people; to all shall be granted mercy, and those that be pure in heart shall inherit this Kingdom of Heaven of which I have spoken."

Paul turned unto the second Ruler, who strove to hinder him in his speech, and he addressed him in the words of the prophet of Israel: "I have nourished and exalted children, and they have rebelled against me. Hearken unto this, O ye people, and beware, lest ye shut your eyes and close your hearts, perceiving not the sign which is given unto you.

"For then shall we turn unto the Gentiles, if ye despise the truth and harden your hearts, as the High Priests and those in authority hardened their hearts, and delivered unto death the Son of God, the Prince of Light."

And now there was great tumult. For those who were strict Jews, believing in the law of Moses and in the rite of Circumcision, were greatly angered, and, rising up in company with the second Ruler, sought to make an end and cast these strangers from their Synagogue.

Certain of the proselytes would gladly have continued to hearken unto Paul, who, in their eyes, was in very truth the Messenger from the Most High, but the saints were not minded to raise disturbance, nor would they have aught but peace in that Holy Place.

So they went forth, and many Greeks and Romans gathered in their train, beseeching them to give them further tidings of the marvel of this Gospel, which was not like unto the ancient wisdom, but like naught else under the sun.

Now I would speak of the third Ruler, of Nahor, who had appeared unto the youth in the semblance of a viper upon the hillside on the eve of the Sabbath.

I have spoken of his vainglory, of his desire for power, and he

was greatly rejoiced, for there was division among the Jews, some taking the part of the saints, and some the part of those who upheld the law of Moses, and derided what they called the false god of fools. It was Nahor's purpose to set up the Church of Christ in Antioch through the preaching and teaching of Paul and Barnabas. Then, when they had gone to reap in other fields, he would be hailed as the prophet, and he would be in authority, and the Romans who ruled in that city would bow down to him, for, after the preaching in the Synagogue, they favoured the new teaching. Did it not make of them sons of God, equal with the chosen people and heirs of eternal life? These Romans had feared the many and cruel gods that had been set over them according to the false teaching of their men of learning. Now they were freed from these avenging gods, and had come out from the darkness of their errors into light. They were greatly rejoiced at the promise of salvation, the promise of a brighter, clearer day when this day of earth was ended. Ye know not the fine savour of this joy that cometh with the first tidings of the Master; for ye have dwelt always with the knowledge of Him, so He is not for you in that first loveliness that was as the dawn for these Greeks and Romans.

Yet, as a cloud gathered quickly, so gathered storm and anger among those Jews who feared the overthrow of the law of Moses, and therefore spoke with harshness and bitterness against the stranger. But their words would not have prevailed if it had not been for Nahor and for the vainglory that burned within him.

Certain of the saints lodged within Nahor's house, and, having tidings of a snare that was set for them by the two Rulers of the Synagogue, he warned Paul that it was intended that he and Barnabas should be taken by night to the mountains, where they would be bound to stones in a solitary place in that wilderness, and left there to be torn to pieces by the wild beasts or to die of hunger.

There was truth in this tale, so the Brethren were housed in quarters near the dwelling-place of the Chief Magistrate. His wife, who had hearkened unto Paul on the Sabbath in the Synagogue, desired to have speech with him, and, when he was in her presence, he spoke out boldly, saying that she, as others who repented, might be baptised and might become one of the children of light.

She questioned him, and, being greatly amazed by the wonder of his words, cast her gold and silver ornaments before him, her rich apparel and her treasure, telling him that all these would she give unto the Church of Christ, and she would from henceforth live simply, worshipping the one true God.

Now Nahor liked not this great fervour, for he feared that his

power over this woman, who ruled her husband and thus in a manner ruled Antioch, would be withdrawn from him and bestowed on this stranger, who, tempted by it, might remain in Antioch, going no farther upon the work of the Lord.

So he chid this woman for her excess of righteousness, and he went from her chamber with a darkened face, following Paul to his abode. It was Nahor's purpose to demand of Paul some surety, to ask for the first place in the new Church which was to be founded at Antioch.

And Paul seemed to have little or no understanding of his desire. He would not apprehend the great work that might be wrought by this man, nor hold for much that he was high in the esteem of the Romans and certain of the Jews.

And it came to pass that Paul spoke of the Master and His saying that the first should be last and the last first. Then Nahor ceased from fair speech and honied words and demanded of Paul the chief place in the Church of Christ at Antioch.

The saint made answer, "Thou art ignorant of righteousness; thou hast not submitted unto the righteousness of God."

Then Paul went to the threshold of that chamber and beckoned to a crippled man arrayed in foul rags and covered with sores.

At the sign from the saint he arose, stumbled forward upon his sticks, and, when he was come unto Paul, he cried out, "Thou knowest that I believe in the Master, and would serve our Lord Christ in all things."

"This crippled beggar," said Paul, turning unto Nahor, "I would set above thee in the Church of Christ. I do know that yesterday from sunrise he had naught to eat, for the people were in a fever passing to and fro, so they forgot this cripple. When evening had fallen he came upon a crust, yet he would not eat, for he found one that was poorer and hungrier than himself, a woman of the town who had not eaten for two days, she having been cast out from the mart where she was to be sold for moneys.

"Now, Brother Nahor, canst thou give up all as this man hath given up all? Art thou prepared to be smitten for the sake of Christ, to be buffeted, to receive stripes, and mayhap to die in torment for His sake? If this be so, thou shalt be equal in the Church with my brother the beggar, who hath faith and hath shared all with the woman who hungered and was in the eyes of all men soiled."

Nahor made no answer. He went from the presence of Paul greatly in wrath, his heart set against the Church. For he believed that Paul was his enemy, and sought to humiliate him thus before

the sweepings of the town. And this fool believed that the saint was in his own image and desired power and the ruling of others, so he sought to overthrow one who might contend with him for the chief place in Antioch.

Thus it came to pass that Nahor turned against the company of the Brethren, and, in the darkness of his ignorance, he searched for some plan whereby he might destroy the Church of Christ and make of none avail the labours of Paul, who had thus shamed him.

CHAPTER VII

NAHOR POISONS THE MINDS OF THE WOMEN OF ANTIOCH

NAHOR sought the women who were held in honour in Antioch, the wives of those Romans who had authority in that city, and he asked them to come to the garden of the house of a friend, where they might talk together. They believed they would there be given further tidings of the strangers and of the Gospel they were bringing to the Gentiles.

When Nahor presented himself to them they gathered round him like bees, and entreated him to lead these strange men unto them, so that they might be further instructed in the mystery of the God who had come to earth, taken on mortal flesh, and then, through the might of His Spirit, conquered death and walked once more among men in the body that had been pierced with holes and rent in divers places.

And Nahor answered that he had not come to speak with them concerning the teachings of Paul and Barnabas; he had come to tell them of the evil purpose that was in their hearts.

These men, he said, were as beggars in their own land, and had been among the multitude who had spread themselves about the wise man and the prophet who was known as Christ in Judæa, and they had hearkened unto His words, but not for any good purpose. They sought only to use the sayings of one who was no longer upon earth, and therefore could not testify against them, to advance their own name, to gain riches, and to have authority over the Gentiles.

It was true that Paul was not one of these lowly men, but he had not been among the people who had hearkened to Christ; he had

come to Jerusalem at a later time, and he had perceived that he would not be chosen to be among the wise men, to be one of the Sanhedrin ; so he had in his anger sought out those in Jerusalem who were of the new sect that followed Christ. And among them he was reckoned as being but of little account, so he sought the Gentile, thinking to persuade him that he was the mouthpiece of the one who had been called the Messiah. In this manner he had gained much wealth, which had been hidden by him, and he went thus from city to city obtaining gold and treasures from the foolish and the unwary in the name of the Prophet Jesus.

And here in Antioch he had fooled the wife of the Chief Magistrate, and, not knowing the guile of his nature, she had given him much treasure, believing in his persuasive speech, believing in his poverty, and that she was giving all to his God that was delivered unto him. But of a truth this was not so. He had kept this treasure for himself, and he was but a robber and a dissembler, seeking thus to live upon the folly that is in the minds of some men and women.

Then were those who had gathered about Nahor much exercised, and they said unto each other : " We were prepared also to give up our possessions, as this man Paul instructed us. Yet we have not been deceived so far, nor shall we fall into the snare into which our sister hath fallen." And they returned to their dwellings, where they spoke with their husbands, and gave them tidings of the folly of the wife of the Chief Magistrate.

Now she was one who had strange and fiery moods, and when she was possessed with zeal it was like unto madness for a space, so that she heeded not the counsel of her reason, but gave herself up wholly to the fire that burned within her.

And so it came to pass with her, as it is ever with those who seek not counsel in the quiet of their hearts, that she turned bitterly and with great heat against the things she worshipped, and gave herself over to a hatred that was as powerful as the love and zeal that had possessed her but a few hours before.

The tidings were borne to her by Nahor that she was called the fool of Antioch, that it had been given out that a babbler, a seeker after folly, had persuaded her to give up to him all her treasure. And when she made answer that Paul was a prophet who sought not his own, Nahor reported to her the talk of the Jews, and spoke words of condemnation that had been uttered by the Rulers of the Synagogue.

And scarcely had Nahor ended when the women came into their presence, and they were like ants, seeking with mocking speech to

sting the vanity of this woman and drive her into a frenzy and humiliate her because of her pride.

When they had thus stirred her to wrath, they withdrew, and she knew that they would make sport of her with others, and, if she did not act in haste, she would of a truth be humiliated to the earth in the eyes of all who were of good repute. So she went to her husband and she told him a tale that Nahor had prepared and given her as wise counsel, and as the only speech that would serve her if she was to hold in his eyes, and in the eyes of all, the esteem of those Romans who were in authority in that city.

Her husband was slow of wit, and he was prepared at all times to hearken unto her, and when he learned from her that these strangers had come only to make disturbance in that city, that they sought to set Jew and Gentile the one against the other, he was much perplexed in mind, and said, "If this be the truth, they shall be cast from the city, so that the civil order may be maintained. We are on the eve of the Sabbath. If the people are stirred up on the morrow by the speech of these men, then shall I give forth the decree of banishment and the city shall be freed from the presence of these strangers."

With this answer was his wife well content, and yet she was much amazed when she learned that the treasure she had surrendered to Paul had been given to the poor, and that fair division had been made among the multitude of beggars who hungered and had not had their fill for many moons in that city, it being a time of dearth, the land having been scorched for want of rain.

This tale of the bestowal of her possessions was borne to her by a slave, and when she spoke of it to Nahor he denied it, calling the slave a liar. And in those days no man accepted the word of any slave.

Yet at a later time, when the Brethren had gone from Antioch, this woman learned that he had spoken what was true. And she learned also that many would have died in that time of need if it had not been for the bread and corn that had been given to the people through the sale of her treasure.

Such was the tale, and the woman was in that hour greatly shamed, and she turned again unto the teachings of the Master, sending messengers from the city to seek out those that served Him, so that they might come unto her, baptise her, and make her a member of the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EXPULSION FROM ANTIOCH

THERE was much stir in Antioch during the days that followed the speech of Paul in the Synagogue. Men sought out and spoke with one another concerning the tidings of the Gospel and these strangers who had a fire and a fervour in their talk that wrought upon the minds of those who were yet as babes in matters that concerned the mystery of God.

The Greeks and Romans sought out the Brethren at all times, so that it was deemed needful that a watch should be set about them; and, as the days passed, the anger of the first and second Rulers of the Synagogue waxed mighty; and they went to and fro among their own people, saying: "We must lay hands upon these men when they rise up and teach on the Sabbath, and let them be so buffeted that they shall not come again to Antioch, but will fly hence to the hills."

And on the eve of the Sabbath the Rulers, becoming fearful of tumult, sent word by a sure hand to Paul and Barnabas, warning them of the rude buffeting that would be bestowed on them if they did not haste them from the city. And certain of those who served in the Synagogue came with this greeting to Paul and Barnabas, and offered themselves as a guard that would accompany them from the city and set their feet upon the road that led to the mountains.

And Paul made answer: "Naught but the guile of evil men shall uproot us from the soil of Antioch. We are not afraid of persecution, and gladly would we suffer torment and stripes on the morrow, for then, of a truth, men would believe in the tidings that we bear to them and in the earnestness of our purpose. We shall speak on the morrow. Naught shall silence us, for the multitude need our words and our prayers."

All that evening the people passed to and fro in the streets speaking with one another, shouting or crying out, or demanding of the passers-by if they were for believing in the new God, the Messiah, or if they were for the law of Moses and the Rulers of the Synagogue.

And some who, in their reply, displeased them, were beaten or hunted through the streets and by-ways. It came to pass that there was no rest on that eve in Antioch. Strange tales were told concerning the wives of those in authority, and some maintained that Paul was a robber who had stolen the treasure of the Chief Magistrate; others contended that he had come into that city

with much gold and had bestowed it on the beggars, so that they might rise up and make disturbance.

Thus it was that the minds of men were as a cauldron, bubbling and seething with their tales and with the furies aroused by them. And so the Chief Magistrate, perceiving all this strange stir, this passing to and fro, was prepared to hearken to the words of his wife when she came unto him, in her anger demanding that the stranger should be cast forth from the town.

Like a green place in a desert was the quiet that reigned about the Brethren, they being gathered together in prayer, and Paul and Barnabas seeking in the silence of their souls that wisdom that cometh only from the Spirit.

Few slept in Antioch that night, for men had taken sides, and some felt that this Gospel was of a truth the greatest wonder that had ever come into the life of man. At sunrise these did set themselves about the Synagogue, waiting for one whom they now knew to have been blinded for a short space by the vision of God.

Soon the multitude increased so much that the guard was summoned to keep a way for those who came and went, and for the people in authority who sought to enter the Synagogue, so that they might hearken unto Paul. Certain of these came because of the tale that the wife of the Chief Magistrate had been persuaded to give up all to this strange man, and others came to learn more of Christ and His strange passing from the earth.

Yet when Paul sought to speak in the Synagogue the Rulers called on those who served them to silence him. And there was great tumult, some saying, "Yea, yea," and some "Nay." But the Rulers prevailed with the people; and the saints went from the Synagogue and spoke to the multitudes of the uncircumcised who were without, saying: "These Jews are not worthy of that life to come of which we bear you the glad tidings. They seek but the darkness of the tomb, so turn we unto the Gentiles, and Greek and Roman shall share in that heritage this people hath cast from them."

And one cried: "Is it not enough that we agree unto the law of Moses? Would ye lay other burdens upon us?"

And Paul made answer: "The law of Moses was but half the measure. We bear to you the full measure in the Gospel of Christ. Ye will not find all that is needful for salvation in the law of Moses, but in the death and rising again of our Master Jesus ye shall obtain forgiveness for your sins, and shall, if ye have faith, attain unto that life everlasting to which He hath prepared the way."

And the people gave a great shout, and some leaped into the air, and others saluted their fellows upon the cheek, showing thus their

joy in these words, that were to them more marvellous than any tale of the heathen gods or any tale of the God of Israel.

Paul and Barnabas exhorted them with great earnestness, striving to win them for Christ, so that they would seek baptism before the setting of the sun. For it was known to the Disciple of Damascus, as some called him, that evil was at hand and the time of their hold upon the hearing of this people short.

And, even as he spoke, the word was passed from one to another that way should be made for the guard of the Chief Magistrate. And lo ! there came a silence, and the people danced no more for gladness, but huddled together as sheep upon the mountain who have knowledge that the wolves are near them.

Then was the decree of banishment from that city delivered to Paul and Barnabas. They were not permitted to say any word in their defence, but led unto the dwellings where they had been housed, and there they were bidden to take with them what they possessed, and, under guard, led through the streets to the gates of the town.

The multitude of Greeks and certain of the Jews followed the soldiers, crying out that this was an ill deed, and praying the Disciples to return unto them ; but then there came bands of Jews sent by the Rulers of the Synagogue, who drove hence those that had goodwill for the saints. And, being Pharisees, and stiff necked, they did cry out upon the name of the Master Christ, giving utterance to such foul words concerning Him and His teachings that the Brethren stopped their ears, and prayed that grace should fall upon their persecutors and remove the blindness from their withered souls.

When the guard had led the Disciples without the town, they closed the gates, so that no man might follow them or have intercourse with them. And these soldiers, being of a cruel temper, with their spears pricked the bodies of the Brethren, and their mouths gave utterance to the foul blasphemy that had been spoken by those who served the Rulers of the Synagogue.

Then were Paul and Barnabas sorely grieved and angered because of the ignorance of these men. They cast from their sandals the dust of that town, declaring that they would not return to a city where such blasphemy had been uttered, and that it should return to the darkness of the shadow of death that endureth, and have no knowledge of the truth and the light.

When the soldiers had departed, and the Brethren had turned their backs upon the city in the valley, there was sorrow among them, and they set forth upon the road with heavy hearts ; for it is

an ill thing to give over a city to the Evil One and the night. And lo ! as they climbed the hill, there came a voice from behind them bearing to them salutations from the people of Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas turned about, wondering at this summons, fearing some evil. Then they perceived certain youths whose clothes were rent, and whose limbs were stained with blood. These spake with them, saying : " Masters, we have risked our lives to come unto you, so that we might entreat you at some future time to return again to Antioch ; for many in our city believe in your words, yet dare not defend you because of the anger of the Jews and the decree of the Magistrate. But come again unto us when there be other Rulers in our Synagogue, and then shall all hearken unto the tidings that ye bear unto us concerning the Messiah."

Paul and Barnabas blessed these youths, telling them to guard the truth and write it upon the tables of their heart ; and that they or their Brethren would return unto Antioch when the time was ripe for the harvest.

Thereupon the youths sought the blessing of the saints and departed, leaving them to wonder at their own feebleness of faith, at their own heaviness of spirit. For they had not failed in Antioch, as was their belief ; they had laid the first stones of the Church of Christ in that city in that hour, and they were filled with the peace of the Holy Ghost. All fear and weariness left them, so that they were glad of heart, and prepared to preach the Gospel in Iconium, a city that lies nigh a great plain, that is not far from Antioch, and at that time had many Jews within its borders.

CHAPTER IX

THE WORK AT ICONIUM STRENGTHENED BY THE MARVEL OF THE FINDING OF WATER

Now Iconium is two days' journey from Antioch, and the road to it passes through a barren, sun-scorched wilderness. In the days when the Brethren journeyed through it, the dust of the road rose up, gathering about them, and the insects arose and tormented them ; yet were they joyful, and they sang praises unto the Lord as they journeyed in the heat of the noonday.

Their souls surrounded themselves with peace as with a nest made with grass ; so they feared naught, being upheld by the Holy Spirit,

who had entered into them when their faith increased, and they were no longer cast down and heavy with despair.

There were many Jews in Iconium, and one named Nathan gave the Brethren welcome and shelter. They bore with them letters from certain of his kin in Antioch, and he was eager to learn tidings of the Messiah.

Thus they lacked neither helpers nor followers in those first days in Iconium. Nathan called together his friends and his kin, and these, being of the Synagogue, besought Paul and Barnabas to teach in it, and relate to the people these truths that they bore with them from Jerusalem as the wind beareth seeds from far lands.

Now many believed when they spoke in the Synagogue, and the Gentiles came also to hear the new masters who had come from far places, and some were baptised and others were much moved in heart and believed.

Only one, Tharamysis, a favourite of the Tetrarch, made mock of them, saying that he hated his neighbour as himself, and all gods and men were in his eyes evil, so that he would not worship this god who had borne love unto the world.

“Yet shall this god bend you to his purpose,” Paul made answer, “and there shall come a time when thou shalt seek for his love, and then mayhap thou shalt eat of the bread of affliction and sorrow for the blasphemy thou utterest in this hour.”

And those that were nigh to Paul knew that the spirit of prophecy was upon him. They besought him to speak further, and they silenced the young man who sought only to jest.

Then did Paul show them that naught but the love of the Master Christ could redeem the world, bear light into dark places, and give peace to the afflicted and distressed.

“We seek to bear unto the earth the image of the Kingdom of Heaven, and first must this hatred of man for man be blotted out, then shall the Church of Christ be so shaped in love and charity that there shall be peace and tranquillity for men, and they shall live as Christ lived, sharing one with another the things of the earth and the things of the Spirit.”

And the sayings of Jesus Christ who was God were recited by Paul in that time, so that many were converted, and the Brethren sought to shape a Church in that city that should gather within it both Jew and Gentile.

There came messengers from Antioch, and one among them was Nahor. These spoke with the Rulers of the Synagogue, charging Paul and Barnabas with treason to the law of Moses, and with the utterance of blasphemy concerning the prophecies of Isaiah and

those of old time, who spake of the coming of the Messiah and of the wickedness of a generation that would not know him.

Nahor and his company claimed that the High Priest at Jerusalem and the council of the Elders would be first among those who would give greeting and worship to the Messiah. "But he hath not yet come," these men maintained, "and certain of the people of Jerusalem, for their own advancement and to gain power over the people, seek with a false tale to deceive the chosen people in all those lands in which they dwell."

And so the Rulers of the Synagogue were dismayed, and they brought the saints and the messengers from Antioch together. Then there was disputation between them, and the Tetrarch, learning of it, summoned them to his presence, and called on them to speak, each in his turn, and make known their teachings and the cause of their dispute.

Whereupon Paul and Barnabas rose up and confounded these messengers, smiting them with many words, showing of a truth that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. And when they had made an end, the Ruler spoke unto them, saying: "Ye have the power to exhort and ye do stir us up with your speech; yet have ye shown us no sign or wonder. Wherefore we may not believe. But if ye be in truth the Disciples of a God who hath come to earth, ye will show us some marvel; then, if we be satisfied, we will believe your testimony and worship your God."

Now the day was nigh to its end and the multitude dispersed, so Paul made answer that on the morrow, or on the day that followed it, he would show the people a sign if the Holy Spirit would send it unto him.

And all that night he abode in prayer, yet there was on the morrow but emptiness in his mind, and so was it with the Brethren, and for some days there came no sign, no voice that would guide them and help them to bear testimony unto Christ. But all had faith, knowing that, if it was the purpose of the Spirit to win the people of Iconium unto the teaching of Christ, a sign would be given or a marvel shown.

I have declared unto you the manner in which this town was set upon that barren plain. It is nigh to a mountain, watered by the springs of that mountain; so it is green and beautiful in the sight of men, with orchards and gardens, with flowers and fruit that deck it about as a king's daughter is decked with rare garments and costly jewels.

Now the plain was dusty and barren and yielded naught to man, so the people in that city depend upon the land that is round about

it, and, if there be a drought, the husbandmen are hard set to live, and the people of the town suffer also, for without water man is without life.

And it came to pass, in that first season in which Paul and Barnabas dwelt in Iconium, that the water clave to the mountain and the springs were dried up on the hillside ; and the common people made lamentation, and were afraid that all would be scorched up, and that they would suffer need, and the plague and dearth, which is the handmaid of death, visit them.

When tidings of their need were borne unto Paul and Barnabas, the emptiness of mind went from them, and they knew in that hour that mayhap the sign of water would be given them.

So they went unto the Rulers of the people and bade them come unto the mountain. There did Barnabas declare unto them that he would, through the Holy Spirit, lead them unto water, and cause it to gush out in abundance, so that the fields should not perish from dryness, and the people should be saved from dearth.

“ Ye cannot make water out of dust ! ” mocked the Rulers. “ Of a truth, if ye were able to do this marvel we should worship your God, but we know that these many days it hath not rained, so that ye cannot find what is not there.”

Then Barnabas prayed, and, when his prayer was ended, he stretched out his arms, walking along the hillside with head bowed down ; and a hush fell on all, and the Rulers followed him with doubting gaze.

Of a sudden his arms were bent towards the earth, and he called unto the Brethren to come and seek in the ground for the treasure that the people desired.

And when they had digged a little way, water gushed out, and many came and filled their vessels, yet more water came, and it was a spring that failed not, but gave forth full measure to the people.

Then, at the bidding of the Spirit, Barnabas stretched forth his arms, once more seeking what was, of a truth, the very life of the people, and once more water gushed out from the scorched earth, and once more did the people fill their vessels ; and this time they lifted up their voices and praised the Messiah, the God of the stranger.

On that hour were many baptised, for the finding of this water was a great marvel. And some scores of men were baptised in it, and thus was Christ glorified on that day, the unbelieving Jew and the heathen being shamed and silenced.

The Rulers turned their faces away from the mountain, and
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they went unto their own places in the city much displeased because of the sign that had been shown that day unto them. Hard and stubborn were their hearts. They hated the saints, who preached humbleness of life, who bade them not to be puffed up or proud, to show with works and faith, and not with idle acts of worship and much speaking, that they believed in the truth and the life in the living God.

CHAPTER X

ON THE ADVICE OF THECLA, PAUL LEAVES ICONIUM

FOR several seasons the Brethren abode in Iconium, and they rested not from their labours with the setting of the sun. For they sought out the poor in the mean streets when they had come in from their toil, and also they went in unto the merchants who feasted in the night-time, and were prepared, when they were filled with wine, to hearken unto the stranger and make sport of him. Yet there was little mockery made after the first hour of teaching, and even the wine-bibbers were roused from the heaviness that the grape of that land begetteth, and they hearkened as to some tale of a poet or of a minstrel, so strange and wondrous seemed to them the miracles wrought by Christ when they were told by Barnabas, who was truly named the Son of Exhortation.

So the days and nights in Iconium passed as swiftly as a weaver's shuttle. And the barque of the Church might have been shaped within the first season of the Disciples' stay in Iconium if it had not been for Nahor and his followers, who were like unto a foul brood in a hive, seeking ever the destruction of purity and truth.

So were men swayed, as the leaves, one way and yet another way, and there was much confusion in their minds. Contention grew sharp among both the Gentiles and the Jews, and few dared speak out boldly for the Master Christ, though in secret they espoused His cause.

And lo ! with the strengthening of the sun, there came a great wind across the plain, bearing within it dust and sickness to the people of that town. And then the Jews who had come from Antioch told the common people that this sickness and these clouds of dust were a sign of the wrath of God at the presence of the stranger within the gates of that city.

Thus it came to pass that both high and low were afflicted in divers manners, and so they turned their faces away from those who had borne unto them the gift of water and the tidings of the mystery of God. Now Luke was of the company of the Brethren, and he had been chosen as the Scribe and the physician of Paul, who at times was ailing in health, needing the succour of one who was learned in the use of herbs.

For Paul had, though of great strength, a stiffening in his bones, and strange pains from them that twisted and knotted his limbs at times, causing him to be bent, and in later days he seemed but small in stature because of this sickness of the body. Yet he was ever stout of heart and firm of purpose, and thus, with the aid of Luke, did he conquer the infirmities of his flesh.

In the time that the sickness fell upon Iconium, men and women were stricken with a plague of boils, and this was grievous unto them. The young women were shamed, fearing to show their faces to their lovers or their husbands.

Then it was noised abroad that Luke had gone in unto the poor, and had cured them of this sickness that was foul in the sight of men. So the threatenings against the strangers ceased, and they were sought out by reason of the power of healing within them.

There was a certain woman of honourable state named Thecla, who was beautiful and famed in that city for the sweetness of her countenance, the light of her eyes. She was the beloved of Tharamysis, and they had often mocked at the saints, deriding their poverty, their gospel of love, and their lack of possessions. Now she fell sick, and she, like many others, lost her loveliness, and her face was so perished that she could not bring herself to look upon it, hiding it with a veil from the eyes of all. And she would not give audience to Tharamysis, for fear he should seek to look upon her countenance, and, perceiving the ill the sickness had done unto it, lose his love for her; for then she would be in much anguish of spirit, for he was in very truth the light of her life and in all things dear to her.

But, knowing of his hatred of the saints, she sent unto them secretly, asking that Luke should be led into her presence and heal her, giving her back that loveliness so prized by Tharamysis. Yet, when Luke stood before her, she was much disturbed and cast down, entreating him to tell no man that he had been summoned to her presence.

And Luke made answer: "It is not needful that I should stay my tongue, for thou wilt at a later time declare unto thy kin that

I have been with thee. I will heal thee of these boils if thou wilt but pay me the price that I shall ask of thee."

She showed him gold, and told him it might be his in abundance if he would heal her, and set the bloom of health upon her cheeks once more.

And he made answer : " I desire only that thou shalt hearken unto my words for a short space, permitting me to tell the tale of our Master Christ and of the forgiveness of sins that cometh from Him alone."

Then did Thecla promise him audience at any time he might choose to seek it, and he, being learned in the use of herbs, healed her of the sore disease that possessed her. Yet, when she was once more beautiful in the eyes of men, the desire to show the light of her countenance was gone from her. She passed her nights wrestling in prayer, and in the daytime she hearkened unto the teachings of Luke and any of the Brethren who were expounding the Word of the Lord.

Now many tales were told of Thecla and of Paul in that city, for she was the first among the women, and in high repute for her loveliness and the nobility of her birth. When she had once heard Paul speaking in the market-place she would hearken unto no other, seeking ever to sit at his feet and hear his words.

So a great scandal arose, and, if you hear strange tales of Thecla, give them no credence, for she was pure in heart and sought but the truth and the life.

Howbeit, the tidings of what was called a noble maiden's madness were borne unto Tharamysis. He had for many moons been kept from her company, and he had in this obeyed his own desire as well as hers, for, being one who sought but the joys of life, he would not soil them by looking upon the evil that had tainted his beloved, the ill that had marred her countenance.

When he learned that she had been baptised, he was much angered, and sought her presence, demanding that she should put from her the teachings of these Jews and give herself unto him in marriage. She strove with him, seeking to remove the blindness from his reason, and to make of him a believer in the Messiah, but he would not be gainsaid and in great bitterness went forth from her presence.

Now in those days the power of the Spirit was bestowed upon Paul and Barnabas in abundance. And they healed certain of those who suffered from the fever borne to them by the hot wind of the plains. And daily they went among the people, exhorting them to be whole in Spirit as well as in body. And so it came to

pass that a community of saints was shaped out of the faith that had been born through these signs and wonders. Men and women remembered the miracle of the water and the cures wrought by the strangers, and so they cast themselves at their feet, calling them "Master," praying that they might be led to Christ.

And Tharamysis, who had at first only mocked the saints, now sought their undoing. He held speech with Nahor, and together they devised an evil that would, they believed, rid the city of this pest. For there was naught in the teaching of the Disciples that they could favour or bear with in any manner. No man who putteth himself first will ever give heed to such teaching. So, one for the sake of love, and the other for the desire of power, sought the destruction of Paul and Barnabas. They were to be set upon and stoned by hirelings, who should not cease from smiting until they were slain.

But, before these men were given their charge, Tharamysis spake with the Tetrarch, hoping to poison his mind and cause him to cast forth the saints from Iconium. The Tetrarch was a just man; he bethought him of the water that had gushed out from the side of the mountain, and, though he would not believe in the teaching of Paul, he would not do him hurt in any manner.

And Tharamysis went unto Thecla, speaking her fair, and hearken- ing unto her talk concerning Christ and His saints; for the young man desired to learn the hour Paul and Barnabas would be without the company of the Brethren, so that they might the more easily be taken and smitten.

Thecla sought with words of love to win Tharamysis from the evil that possessed his soul. And he was so stirred by her beauty and by the wine of which he had partaken that he spoke of the ill thing he had devised and of the death that awaited Paul and Barnabas. He deemed that it would be easy to smite them, for on that very day there had been much disputation, Jew and Gentile contending in words with the saints in the market-place.

Now Thecla led her lover on with honied words, causing him to betray all the secret thoughts of his heart, so that he cried out that not for another day would he endure the presence of Paul in Iconium. Then this young man fell into the sleep of wine, and Thecla, summoning one of her household, charged him that he should seek out the saints and give them warning that they would be slain on the morrow, for there would be gathered together a mighty company of both Jews and Gentiles, who for gold would surely stone them, and thus put them to death.

The messenger bore unto this noble woman the answer that the

saints were not afraid, and would continue to abide in Iconium ; for there was much work for them still in this city. Then, heeding not the peril to her good name, Thecla went out into the night and sought the presence of Paul, and she made known unto him the whole design of Tharamysis ; and she showed him letters from Lystra and Derbe, from certain of her kindred who desired tidings of the strange men who had wrought so many marvels in Iconium.

“ There are others who have need of thee. Fall not into the snare that hath been set about thy feet, but haste unto the people of Lystra, who are likely to hearken unto thee and give thee welcome.” Such was the speech of Thecla.

And Paul bethought him that for many months he had contended with the Jews in Iconium, and, because of their hatred and their bitterness, much good fruit had been lost ; many of the heathen who might have believed had turned away once more into the darkness of their idolatry.

There were few Jews in Lystra and Derbe ; few were there, therefore, to hinder the work of the Lord ; and the people, being untutored and simple of mind, might the more easily be moved to embrace the faith of Christ.

Fierce as the evening wolves were the unbelieving Jews in Iconium. So Paul was weary and sick at heart, desiring only that he might no more look upon the face of his own people, who had so often mocked and derided the teachings of Christ.

The night was dark, and Thecla, through a youth who was of her kin, secured the right for the saints to pass without the city gates. And that night they fled from Iconium, seeking the road to Lystra.

When day was come, Paul knew that in his flight he had been guided by the Spirit. When they were gone from Iconium the common people would mourn for their comforters and their healers, and would esteem the more highly the teachings of those who had fled from their midst. Then would their faith in Christ be established upon a rock, and naught would shake it or root it up from the soil of their simple hearts.

CHAPTER XI

PAUL AND BARNABAS ARE AT FIRST TAKEN FOR GODS AT LYSTRA :
THE TERRIBLE DYING AND RETURN TO THE BODY OF PAUL

It came to pass that in Lystra the Brethren drew about them many of the husbandmen, and, when Paul could walk forth once more, these were gathered together in the market-place waiting to hear the words of the stranger.

They were a simple people, who would hearken to any traveller who bore them tidings from the great cities, and it was the common talk that Paul and Barnabas had dwelt in Cyprus, and there had seen many of the gods ; and stranger still was the tale that these men had, in eastern lands, had intercourse with a god who was the enemy of Jupiter, and would, in the days to come, seek to wrest the earth from him.

Now it seemed wise to these poor, simple folk that they should hearken unto the stranger and seek to learn from him which god would prevail, for it might lead to the undoing of the people, to the destruction of the harvest, if they worshipped a god who might be overthrown.

Thus spoke they one with another in their own tongue. But they had understanding of Greek, and so they could follow the words of the preacher, yet were their wits so thickened by toil that they were but confused at first by the tidings of the Messiah who had been hanged upon a tree, and had died so that they might be forgiven their sins and obtain a life of ease in the world after death.

They believed that this was the promise of the God of the stranger. So they were eager to hearken unto Paul when he stood among them, and, beckoning with his hand, demanded silence. But a beggar, who had been a cripple all the years of his life, crawled to the feet of Paul, and, in a loud voice, besought him, if he were in truth the messenger of the God of Judæa, to cure him and make him whole. Now Paul bent down, gazing with earnestness upon the beggar, seeking that light of faith in his countenance which is needful if the Spirit is to pass from the master to the ailing man.

And Paul perceived that there burned within this ignorant man the pure flames of the Spirit, and so he doubted not, but prayed that the power might be given him to heal.

And lo ! there came that strange stirring within him and the whisper of voices in his ears ; he was filled with the joy everlasting.

and cried out, " Rise up and walk, for behold the Spirit is with thee and me and it maketh thee whole."

Then did this man, whose limbs had never borne him, rise up and leap into the air, and run across the market-place, as swiftly as the youth runneth in his hunting or in his games.

And the people were amazed and trembled, and first they murmured, saying, " We have been blind. These are not men, but gods." Then they cried out in their own tongue, " Behold, Jupiter ! Behold, Mercurius ! These are the mighty gods come down to earth to give us increase and to bless our lands."

And the multitude drew apart from the Brethren, and, as they spoke but their own language, Paul and Barnabas did not know that they had been hailed as gods. So they thought that the people were turning against them, and would perhaps cast them out from their midst. For their countenances were fierce and their cries wild.

Then Paul and Barnabas went to the house wherein they lodged, and lo ! as Paul entered it, Timothy cast himself down at his feet, calling him " Master," and declaring his belief in Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. For Timothy had some learning, and now at last had he understanding, and that faith in our Lord Jesus Christ which remained with him through all the persecutions, even unto death.

The people sought out the Priest, and bade him loose the oxen that were to be sacrificed in the temple without the town consecrated to Jupiter. They cried : " Jupiter hath come to earth and is walking among us, and in his company is Mercury ! " For Paul they held to be Mercury, as he spake many words, and he had not the height of Barnabas, whom they hailed as Jupiter.

They bore garlands of roses and other flowers and meat offerings, the oxen that were to be sacrificed, unto the house in which Paul and Barnabas abode. And, when these two perceived the Priest and the multitude, and learned that these men believed the gods were come to earth and were among them, they prayed unto God for guidance ; then, casting themselves into the midst of the worshipping people, entreated them to hearken unto their words, to believe that they were but the messengers of the true God and humble men like themselves.

But the people ceased not from worshipping, and the Priest raised his knife, seeking to slay the oxen and make a sacrifice on the instant that would appease these gods. And he was fearful, and could not for terror perceive the meaning of their words.

So they rent their clothes, for they knew that this would be a sign that might be comprehended by one who had knowledge of the

worshipping of gods ; and the fear passed from the hearts of the people, and they rose up, making great tumult, and demanding of Paul and Barnabas some testimony as to their land and their gods.

And in that hour they spoke much concerning Christ and the signs and wonders He had shown ; and the people listened in silence, striving to grasp at the truth, which was as far beyond them as the brow of the hills from the valley.

But there came to the Priest messengers from Nahor and the Rulers of the Synagogue in Iconium. These sought to make the Priest and his people believe that Paul and Barnabas were magicians, who held intercourse with Satan, and through his aid would work miracles that would rouse the envy of the gods, who would punish the people for listening to them and worshipping them.

The Lycaonians of Lystra had little knowledge of Satan, but they perceived that they had erred in calling these men Jupiter and Mercury, and feared the anger of their false gods ; so they cried out against the Brethren, casting stones at them, reviling them, and seeking to lay hands on the person of Paul and Barnabas.

The Brethren fled from that town. And Paul sought with words to stay these poor heathens, entreating them to hearken to him. And in that hour of need, as he stood alone facing their anger, he cried unto the Spirit, praying that yet another miracle should be wrought through him, and these tamed as the wild beasts of the wilderness when they are led captive into the cities.

But the Spirit is, as I have told you, as the wind, and no man knoweth the hour of its coming or its going. It led not that multitude captive. They were deaf to the speech and the pleadings of the saint, casting stones at him, striking him upon the face, and trampling on his body when it lay upon the ground.

Many of them were drunken with wine, others were drunken with fear ; so they stayed not outside the temple of Jupiter, but sought their own houses. For they still feared that the wrath of Jupiter might suddenly fall upon them as fire falleth from the skies. They believed that they had been bewitched and fooled, and must pay the price of their folly.

Thus was Paul preserved from death ; and in that hour when he lay upon the ground, sorely wounded and distressed in body, he saw once more the face of Stephen, and it was like the face of an angel. Then he knew that this was his punishment for his murder of that brother in Christ ; and thus the anguish of his soul was eased.

He passed peacefully into the darkness of a swoon. Yet he lay thus but for a short space, for his soul sought freedom from that torn body which was no longer to be borne as a lodgment ; and so

his breath was like the flutter of wings, coming quick and short, as the life sought that outer life, and the harbourage of the Invisible to which Paul was nigh in that hour.

Of a truth he died, and his Spirit rose from the clay and yet again beheld Stephen, his tortured face and the bloody sweat upon his brow. And lo! a Voice spoke unto Paul, saying: "Take the hard road back to earth; thou art not washed clean of thy early sin. Thou shalt die daily, suffer persecution a thousandfold, so that thou mayest by expiation obtain the peace everlasting. Thy time is not yet come. Enter again into the body and testify unto our Lord Jesus Christ."

And a great anguish was Paul's, because he had thus passed through the gate of death and must return once more to the clay because of the slaying of Stephen in that past time, and because the Church had need of him. There is no torment like unto the torment of the return to the dead body; and this was the price Paul paid for his own redemption.

He spoke only to a few at a later time of that hour when he was without the body, when Stephen came unto him and bade him coffin himself once more in the clay. For it was grievous pain to Paul to remember the hour when the freedom of the Kingdom was his and then was wrested from him, so that the purpose of the Lord might be fulfilled.

CHAPTER XII

ON THE ADVICE OF TIMOTHY, PAUL LEADS THE BRETHREN TO DERBE :
GAIUS APPOINTED SHEPHERD OF THE FOLD THERE

THE Brethren had fled before the angry people; and now, when they perceived the multitude had scattered, they became bold, and in the twilight sought for Paul, calling to him, entreating him, if he had voice, to make an answer. The people had dragged his body outside the town. It had been their purpose, before fear seized upon them, to carry it to the temple of Jupiter and perhaps offer it to their god, so that his wrath might be appeased.

There were but kites near Paul when the Brethren beheld his body; and they were sure as they gazed upon it that life had fled, and that their beloved brother in Christ had left them in this perilous time, when men were in wrath against them, and they had no man among them who could guide them.

For Barnabas, though of a kindlier nature, was one who could comfort rather than lead. And thus they mourned for Paul in that dim hour, breaking into lamentations, and praying that his soul might find rest in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And lo! the body stirred. It rose up from the ground, and the voice of the dead gave them greeting, and they durst not utter a word or raise their eyes, so stricken were they with wonder at this rising up of the dead.

When they recovered from their amazement, they sought his guidance, and he bade them return with him to Lystra, and seek the house of Eunice and Lois, where they might obtain shelter for the night and healing for their wounds.

One cried, "We are afraid, master, they will set upon us, and this time all will be slain. Let us go hence while the darkness is still a covering to us, for we greatly dread the messengers from Nahor, the Jews of Antioch, who will not cease from pursuing until we are utterly destroyed."

Howbeit, Paul would not hearken to this entreaty. He bade them follow him. And, leaning upon the shoulders of Barnabas and that new Disciple Timothy, he walked once more, seeking the road to the street where was the dwelling of Eunice and Lois.

The gates of the city were open, and there was no guard watching by them. The streets were empty of people; no man or woman stirred abroad; the doors and all the openings to the houses were fast closed, and a great hush was over that once clamorous town.

The Brethren believed that this was a sign sent from God unto them to give them heart.

They were made welcome by the kindred of Timothy, who gave them food and treated their wounds, so that no man suffered more than he was able to bear. And there was great rejoicing among them, so that when the sun rose on the morrow they were prepared to follow Paul into the market-place.

It had been given out that the first sorcerer, who was known as Paul, had been slain, and that only his bones, which had been picked clean by the birds, remained without the town. So ease had come to the minds of the fearful people, who believed that the death of Paul would give satisfaction to their false gods, and that it might stay their wrath, and sate their lust for a blood-offering.

And lo! as the sun rose and the people set about their work, they perceived the strangers once more walking abroad in their city. Whispers went from mouth to mouth that the dead were walking; that Paul the Sorcerer was once more among them.

A great fear and bewilderment fell upon them, for they maintained that no man who had been slain could thus re-enter the body and live once more in that ravaged habitation. So, of a truth, Paul was not human, and, if he were not Mercurius, he was some other god, and they were, therefore, afraid to approach the Brethren or to lay a hand upon them. The people were as if a serpent gazed upon them. They dared not stir from the market-place, and there was a great silence as Barnabas spoke unto them of the Messiah and the words of the Gospel concerning the salvation of those of the Gentiles who lay in darkness.

But, when Barnabas ceased from speaking, the Jews who had come from Antioch and Iconium went among the Gentiles and sought once more to incite them against the saints. Then Timothy entreated Paul and the Brethren to go unto Derbe, to one Gaius, where they would find lodgment. There might they scatter the seed of the Gospel and teach the people, who were gentle and without malice, who would gladly hearken unto them.

Timothy argued that, after a short space, the unbelieving Jews would return to Antioch and Iconium, then would the people of Lystra be freed from the venom of their tongues, and they would listen to the teaching of the Brethren; and this counsel seemed good to Paul.

He hearkened to few men, but Timothy, though young in years, was one of them. He was much loved by Paul, who held that he possessed the wisdom of the Greek and the fervour of the Jew, these two making him a mighty weapon that could destroy all disputation or trouble among the Brethren. There was no difficulty that Timothy could not overcome with his understanding and his eagerness; so he became the companion of Paul in some of his later journeyings.

Now Derbe is near a lake, and is a town remote from others. The people had little knowledge of the doings of other nations, and, there being no Jews among them, they had no knowledge of Christ nor of the God of Israel. So the tidings the saints bore them were as strange and fresh as the Garden of Eden to Adam in the dawn of the first day of Creation. And these people were greatly moved by the tale of a loving God who was not like their cruel gods, but had compassion for all men.

So many at Derbe embraced the faith of Christ, and Gaius was appointed shepherd of that fold, for he was a man of understanding, who at one time had studied in the schools at Tarsus, and he was won through his wisdom, as the people of his town were won through simplicity, to a faith in Christ.

Here the Disciples rested, and here Paul became whole in body, for he had been sick unto death after that wrestle between life and death at Lystra, when Stephen had appeared unto him first as a comforter, then as a judge, to sentence him to be once more a prisoner in the flesh and subject to the cruelties of man.

CHAPTER XIII

PAUL'S TALK WITH THE CAPTAIN ON THE VOYAGE TO ANTIOCH :
PAUL'S INTERCESSION SAVES THE SHIP FROM DESTRUCTION

PAUL, Barnabas, Luke, and the company of the Brethren obtained passage in a ship that bore to Antioch¹ rare and precious merchandise, to be sold to the rich Romans who dwelt in that city. And the captain, who was free in his speech, said to the travellers : " If we meet a tempest, and if the ship laboureth sore against the wind, I would more gladly cast into the sea the men who travel with us than these treasures ; for they are of great price, and few men are of the same worth as even the beasts of the field."

And Paul perceived that this man, though he jested, was one who possessed great wisdom, not gathered from study in the schools, but in his journeyings to the east and west. So, when the watch was set, and the wind blew fair and the ship rode as a swallow over the waters, Paul sought out the captain and talked with him concerning his many journeys by sea and by land.

And the captain spoke of the edge of the world, of strange islands that were near the very borders of the earth. These lands were fair to look upon, and were peopled by men who had little knowledge of the earth. Some of them knew not even of the greatness of Rome, and were glad to hearken to the tales of travellers.

Paul, hearing of the people that thus dwelt in darkness, nigh to the setting of the sun, hungered for these souls, yearning for their redemption, and he asked of the captain the manner in which he might journey to these islands, and whether the people that lived upon them believed in gods, or whether they worshipped fire. Had they tidings given them of the one God alone ?

The captain made answer : " Of a truth, master, they worship strange gods. In these matters they have little learning. But, as the Greeks have gods, so have these barbarians gods with strange

¹ In Syria.

names, who are cruel, even as our gods are cruel. Many of the people of my own nation no more believe in them. They say these graven images are but vanity. We must worship man, not god. Such is the new teaching of the learned men in the schools. I have in my time hearkened to them, yet I do still have faith in the old gods. They reign in Heaven, but I care not for them, and at times, when there is a contrary wind, or when the storm beateth about my ship, I hate these gods, for they have no mercy or charity. If they cared for men, they would punish the evildoer. But they let the wicked flourish, and by them are men of good report chastened, and at times severely punished for their virtue. I look upon these gods as the enemy of man. Yet I fear them, for they cast spells upon the sea, causing it to boil and seethe when they are angered, and causing many good ships to perish out of mere wantonness of spirit."

Then Paul opened his mouth and spoke of the one God ; of His only Son, who had been hanged upon a tree, so that all men might come to believe in the one God, and might put from them the graven images of the false gods—these false gods beings but evil spirits, children of Belial, of the Host of Satan. They persecuted men, calling themselves gods when they were but of the Pit and of the Evil One.

And Paul spoke of the Prophets, of their prophecies concerning the Son of God, who would take on flesh and bear to men the promise of the life everlasting.

"If the peoples of the earth will hearken to the teachings of Christ, which we are bearing to the Gentiles, then, of a truth, will the host of darkness be dismayed and cease from persecuting, fleeing as the shadows before the rising sun. The Messiah gave His life for sinners, so that all men might believe on Him and the image of the Kingdom of Heaven be shaped upon the earth."

For a space the captain was silent and troubled. For, though he spoke against his own gods, yet he would not have a stranger speaking ill of them. And he declared himself in this wise : "Master, mayhap your God is good, and mayhap He careth for the children of men. But ye have not shown me by any sign that He is not an evil spirit. You call my gods evil. Zeus is my persecutor, you say. Now tell me for what reason I may believe that your Holy One is true and my gods are foul and false."

And Paul spake of the miracles wrought by Christ, of the miracles wrought by His Disciples through the Holy Spirit, which had been sent to them by Him. But the captain was of a stubborn mind, and he made answer : "I have hearkened to the tales of many travellers, master, and they are filled with such marvels, the known world

could not contain all the wonder of them. Yet I do not doubt you. I only ask that you show me a sign, so that I may believe in your God and in His mighty power."

And Paul bade the captain bide his time, for, if the Lord God desired to reveal Himself to him through a sign, then would a sign be given. But all were not worthy, and no sign might be given him. Then a silence fell upon these two, and Paul, making no sound, prayed that this man might be saved, might be turned from the unbelief which was as a cloud about him.

As night fell upon the sea there fell a great mist and darkness with it, that, as the hours passed, did not rise or lighten. And the captain became bewildered, not knowing to what quarter he was bound. Then, out of the night, their appeared many little stars, and these were the lights of a ship that drew nigh to them. The captain hailed this ship, yet no answer was made to him, and the sea was hushed, and the wind whispered no more in the sails. So the captain sought to follow this ship through the mists, for he feared the coast that was not far from them, according to his belief. There came little puffs of wind that caused the greater vessel to draw nigh to the silent ship that made its way before them through the blackness.

And lo ! as they gazed upon it, the crew cried out with one voice, " 'Ware, captain. Behold the ship with the burning lamps."

And as they cried the wind freshened, and they heard the sound of waves smiting the shore. Then they knew that they were in great peril, being nigh to the Spears, evilly-shaped rocks that are spread around that coast. " Call upon thy God to-work a miracle," said the captain, " else we shall all perish, for the wind presses us hard, and I know not in this night how I may shape my course."

Paul prayed. The ship with the burning lamps vanished, and there was naught but darkness around them and the loud noise of the waters breaking on the rocks. And Paul instructed the captain concerning the manner in which he should guide his vessel, bidding him have no fear, for the Lord had hearkened unto his prayer. And the captain obeyed Paul ; for his mind was distracted, as he had knowledge of the dangers that beset the path of the ship.

It was day, and still was the darkness of this mist about them, imprisoning them so that no eye could perceive the land, nor could any man, even in the light, perceive the rocks that are near that shore.

The crew prayed to their gods, while the Brethren prayed unto the Lord. And lo ! the mist lightened, and there was a whiteness all around. The waves made no great clamour, for the ship, guided by the word of Paul, passed through the dangers that were about it,

wheeling outwards, away from the coast, so that, when the mist had lifted, the barque was once more upon the open sea, and both men and treasure were saved from a sure destruction through the sign that had been given by Paul unto the captain.

And when day came, and he could shape his course once more, he cast himself at the feet of Paul, crying out that his God was the only true God. For He had regard for men, and had saved all in that ship from perishing by reason of the guidance He had given them.

And the saint made answer : " Of a truth my God hath guided us through the perils that were spread as a snare about us. And your gods, being the children of Beelzebub, sought to destroy us by sending us this ship, which was but mist transformed into a shape that would lure us on to death. Captain, you will again be in danger as you ply your trade upon the waters. But, if you will believe on our Lord Jesus Christ and pray unto our Father, as I shall teach you, then you need not fear the winds or the tempests. For even if these, despite your prayer, do shake and break your barque into fragments, and devour you and the crew that serve you, yet will you find no kingdom of the dead, as it is called by your learned men, but shall, after your passing from this life, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, which hath been prepared for those that love the Master Christ. You shall, in truth, be heir to the life everlasting, and to a joy without ending, if you do now repent, and, turning from your false gods, which are but evil spirits, worship the one true God."

And the captain and his crew hearkened from that day forward to the teaching of the saints, and were, at a later time, baptised in Antioch.

CHAPTER XIV

PETER AND PAUL TAKE DIFFERENT SIDES IN THE DISPUTE ABOUT THE POSITION OF THE GENTILE CONVERTS IN THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

THERE was much rejoicing among the Brethren in Antioch when Barnabas and Paul came once more among them and rehearsed the tale of their journeys, and spoke of the signs and wonders wrought by the Spirit through them in Cyprus, at Paphos, in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. And when the elders had hearkened unto them, Paul spoke unto all the faithful who were gathered together

to hear the tidings the travellers bore them. There were many Gentiles among the saints in Antioch, and they were steadfast in the faith of Christ, and even more eager to bear testimony unto him, and to lead his life, than the devout Jews, who were wary in all their dealings with the Brethren who were not of their race.

Now Antioch, at that time, was a great city, and was the glory of Asia and the abode of the men of many nations. Its gardens and houses were fair to look upon, and it was a city where men spoke much of God, and disputed with one another concerning the mystery of life and death.

In a grove upon the slopes of Silpius stood a mighty temple built by the Greeks in past days. And it was the place wherein they worshipped Apollo and Diana, offering unto them blood sacrifices, polluting the very name of god with the fornication and the foul arts practised by them. And Paul and Barnabas declared that they would overthrow these gods, that they would not by violence cause their destruction, but through wisdom and through the preaching of the truth would they win all men from them.

Now the city was governed by an assembly, but the Jews, who were in great numbers, obeyed one called the Archon, and he, being a Jew, yielded in matters of faith to no man in Antioch. When he was in doubt he sent messengers unto the High Priest in Jerusalem and sought counsel from him.

Now when Paul and Barnabas had been but a score of days in Antioch, the number of those who believed in Jesus Christ was mightily increased. For these two went forth among the Gentiles, teaching in the market-place, teaching even beside the groves of Apollo and Diana. And men, hearing that the people of Iconium, of Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Cyprus, were turning unto Christ, and had come to believe in Him and His name, were moved to believe also to seek baptism.

It came to pass that, on the Sabbath, when Paul taught in the Synagogue, the Gentiles pressed in to hearken unto him; and so great was the multitude that the building could not contain them, and certain of the Jews feared that soon the Gentiles would be in greater numbers than they in the Church of Christ, and would seek to destroy belief in the law of Moses and in the ancient covenant of the fathers in Israel.

And Peter, coming at this time to Antioch, was sought out by the Archon, who declared that he could not reason with Paul, who was like one possessed, seeking out the common people, gathering within the fold vagrants of every race, baptising them, and making them equal heirs with the devout Jews of Christ and His Kingdom.

Then Peter declared that Jesus had bidden His Disciples to go unto the ends of the earth, bearing His Gospel to the people in every land.

The Archon cried: "Let Paul and his Brethren go forth once more and teach among the heathen, for these Gentiles will cause trouble in our Synagogue and among our people if they increase in numbers as, each day, they increase, while the Apostle of Antioch is among us." For Paul had been named thus because of his zeal for the Lord's work.

However, Peter would not yield to the word of the Archon, who had declared his belief in Christ, yet feared the harvest that might be reaped if all men believed in His name. Thus it was that Peter, who had come for a season to Antioch, was beset by the Archon and certain Pharisees on the one hand, and, on the other, by Lucius and Manaen, who desired only the Church's increase. And to those who would cast out the Gentiles, separating them from the believing Jews, he made answer in this wise.

On the morrow following their conversation with him, he stood beside Paul, and preached the Word of Christ unto the Greeks, who were going up to the temple of Apollo to do homage to their false gods, and certain merchants who hearkened to him besought him to come into their dwelling and eat with them, so that they might hear further tidings of the Messiah. And Peter, being stirred by their earnestness and their desire for the truth, went into their dwellings, not one day only, but on several days, teaching without ceasing, sowing the seed of the Word wherever the soil seemed fruitful.

Now many even of the Jews who had half believed in Christ had not bidden Peter or Paul into their dwellings; for they were slow to yield themselves wholly to the new truths, and feared to be seen in the company of the Disciples. So it came to pass that the Archon sent messengers unto Jerusalem to certain of the Pharisees who believed in Christ, but yet held that the law of Moses came before Him and was, therefore, greater than His teachings. And among these saints was one named Gershon, who desired to be a chief among the people and held in esteem because of his wisdom. So he journeyed unto Antioch in the company of certain Pharisees, who held with him that the Church was for the few and not for the many, that it would be corrupted and befouled by the multitude if they came to believe in Christ and sought to be members of His Church. Now Gershon and Abinadab were held in high honour by the Rulers of the Synagogue at Antioch, it being a town of less repute for learning in the law of Moses than Jerusalem, the Holy City.

So it came to pass that one day, when evening had fallen, Peter was summoned into the presence of these Pharisees, who were lodging with the Archon, and in their company were the Rulers of the Synagogue whom they had won to their manner of thinking. And those who had hearkened, in all humbleness of heart, to the preaching of the Apostles now spoke sternly unto Peter, declaring that they would close the doors of the Synagogue to the Gentiles and to those who believed in Christ, that they would cease from teaching His Gospel, and would adhere only to the law of Moses, if Peter did not turn from the Gentiles, cease from seeking them in their homes from that time forth, and make an ordinance that no further Greeks, Romans, or other heathens should in Antioch be received into a Church which was designed for the Jews above every other nation under the sun.

Then was Peter roused to anger, and he disputed with them, seeking to show them that the teaching of Christ, when He spoke of charity, alone should bind them in their dealings with the Gentiles. Yet they would not cease from threatening disturbance and dissension in the Church if he would not yield to them. So at the last, to save the saints, to preserve their peace, he declared that he would remain the Apostle of circumcision, and would go no more among the Gentiles in that city, but speak only to the Jews, working among them as Paul laboured among the Gentiles.

From that day he went no more with him into the market-place, and he would not, as the leader of the Church and its Bishop in that town, go unto certain noble Romans who bade him to their dwellings so that they might be instructed in the Gospel of Christ.

And the Rulers in the Synagogue, Gershon and the Archon, rejoiced because Peter would live no longer with the Gentiles, but held himself apart, going in only unto his own people.

And lo! when the Sabbath was come, in the presence of the Elders and the Rulers, Paul charged Peter with a falling away from charity, and blamed him for refusing to go unto the Gentiles, who desired to have tidings of Christ from the lips of one who had known Him. Then Peter made answer that the people of Judæa were his charge, and that he must, for the sake of the Church in Antioch, maintain the law of Moses, else there would be dissension, and the Church would be scattered through the divisions caused by those who held that they must not in any manner depart from the rites and observances ordained by Moses.

And Paul made answer: "If thou at one season livest after the fashion of the Gentiles thou shouldst not seek to compel the

Gentiles to live after the fashion of the Jews. For I do read this as thine intention in this matter.

“It is not meet that the children of men should hunger when the table is loaded with bread. The Master Christ would have all men know of the truths He bore unto them. If ye will not permit the Gentiles to share with you in the belief in Christ Jesus as the Son of God, the Messiah, then let the law perish, let men live no longer by rites and observances. Let them live by faith only, for, of a truth, the law may grow to be a graven image, which ye will worship, and forget, in your worshipping, the Lord God of our fathers and the Messiah, the Prince of Life.”

Whereupon there was a great outcry, the Rulers smiting the air with their hands, and declaring that on the morrow must Paul be cast out from the Synagogue and from the Church. And for a space Peter strove with them, yet they would not hearken, and the assembly was dispersed, the Archon, the Rulers, and the Pharisees of Jerusalem taking counsel with one another, Peter being among them, and seeking ever to quell their clamour and to hush the wild words that fell from their lips.

Some declared that Paul should no longer be permitted to live; that in the years that were past he had persecuted the saints, and now sought to destroy the saints by guile, to cause the Church to perish from within. As the kernel of a nut dies first, so would the faith of the Jews be first destroyed, and after that all would shrivel up and perish.

And Peter sought to defend Paul, saying that he had wrought miracles among the Gentiles, and thus it was shown that the Holy Spirit had entered into him and he was therefore the chosen of the Lord. Those of the Brethren who declared that he should die, and did accuse him of secret plotting against the Church, were in danger of Hell fire. For no man may call his brother “Raca,” and no man who hath not been filled with the Holy Spirit may judge another in this haste.

Then the Archon declared that, if Peter was on the side of Paul, all the devout Jews of Antioch would withdraw themselves from the Church, and it would thus be destroyed and would be scorned by all men. For they, the Pharisees, would not hold with one who declared that the law must perish, so that faith might have its fulfilment.

After many hours of disputation it was determined that Paul should appear once more before the Elders, and they would decree that he must teach the law and set it before the tidings of the Gospel, demanding of all those Gentiles who would be baptised

that they must first be circumcised and be known as proselytes, so that the glory of the ancient faith should increase and all men yield unto the law of Moses.

Now Barnabas was not of the same tempered metal as Paul, and his soul was much afflicted with doubts concerning the wisdom of his friend and brother in Christ. And, at the bidding of Peter, he reasoned with the penitent of Damascus, and did protest to him that he had not been one of the Twelve, nor had he served Christ many years, so was he forward in his declaration concerning faith and the law, and he should hearken to the Elders, who had been chosen to be first in the Church.

And Paul loved Barnabas, so he would not dispute with him, holding his peace. Thus it was that the Rulers consented to speak with Paul once more, for they were led to believe that the persuasion of Barnabas had caused him to repent of his errors. And, when he had come to the place of assembly, Peter rose up before the Rulers and admonished him, demanding that he should ask their pardon for having, in his anger, cried out that the law of Moses should perish rather than that the Gentiles should be lost to the Church.

Peter said : " It is a time of great peril for all Jews. In the years that are past the Greeks have contended against them at Alexandria. The Romans sow dissension among us in Judæa, and seek to persecute us by subtle means. They sought to set up an image of the Emperor in our Temple in the past ; they seek ever to destroy our faith. There are enemies on all sides of us, and, though there is peace between Jew and Gentile in Antioch, yet we know not how long this peace will reign. And so it behoveth all Jews to stand by one another and cherish the faith of their fathers."

Then Paul rose up, demanding that there should be silence until he had made an end of speaking. And first he asked forgiveness of them if he had in any manner derided what was to them holy. " But I do affirm," he declared, " that the Messiah came to save all men, and, if we lay the burden of circumcision and of the observances decreed by Moses on the Greeks and Romans and the people of other races, then will they turn from our teaching and remain in darkness.

" Now I went privily to Jerusalem in a past time and I lodged with our brother in Christ, with Peter, and for many hours I hearkened unto his teaching, and he hearkened unto my design that I should go forth among the Gentiles with the tidings of the Messiah ; and in that time he agreed with me, that the Gentiles, being ignorant of our law and set against many of the rites practised

by us, should not be compelled to hold with them. For before all else cometh belief in the Messiah, and in the redemption of men through Him. I went not forth, therefore, without authority. Peter was of one mind with me in this matter, and he cannot deny it."

There was much murmuring among the Rulers and among the Pharisees, and one among them rose up, saying : " We live in peace at Jerusalem. We are not persecuted in these times of peril ; yet we may not look for mercy if we thus welcome among us Greeks and Romans who hold not with us. The High Priest and the Sanhedrin will use their authority, and seek to afflict us in divers ways, if Paul thus gathereth all men within the Church. Even those in Jerusalem at this hour who do not believe in Christ hold in respect and reverence James the Just, who is chief among us.

" Howbeit, they will hold him no longer in esteem, and they will not hearken unto him when he preacheth the Word of Christ, if they learn that he favoureth the doctrine that is taught by the Apostle of Antioch."

Once more the Rulers admonished Paul, and demanded that he and those who followed him should yield to them, and baptise only those Gentiles who were proselytes and believers in the law of Moses. But he would not hearken unto them, speaking with heat and fervour ; and so greatly did he anger the Elders that certain clapped their hands upon his mouth, bidding him hold his peace.

Then Peter called upon them to lay no hand upon the brother, and he declared that this matter, being of weighty import, could not be determined in Antioch. Wherefore he would go up to Jerusalem, and hold counsel with the Disciples, so that an ordinance might be given forth that would bind all who were members of the Church of Christ.

The Pharisees did not like this ruling until they reflected that they would go unto James and John, who dwelt in Jerusalem, and set them against Paul in this matter, so that the Twelve and their Brethren would declare an ordinance that would shut the doors of the Church on those of the heathen who held not with the law of Moses.

These men, therefore, designed that Paul should remain in Antioch ; and so they agreed that he might continue to preach among the Gentiles in that city as it would please him. And Paul, who knew naught of this snare, was tempted by the rich harvest of souls in Antioch, and stayed behind so that he might reap the fruits that were thus spread before him.

Peter had no knowledge of their purpose in this favour that they had seemed to grant the brother. So in parting he blessed him, and bade him continue to labour even in strange vineyards for the Lord.

CHAPTER XV

PAUL IS REPUDIATED BY HIS FATHER

Now it is needful, so that ye should have understanding of the council in Jerusalem, that I should write of that earlier journey when Paul went up to Jerusalem before he took ship with Barnabas and sailed for Cyprus.

I have told you how these two were blessed by the Rulers of the Church at Antioch, and how they kept themselves apart from the people, fasting and praying, so that the Holy Spirit might descend upon them.

One night the winds of God once more passed through the chamber in which Paul abode. He perceived the radiance of the Spirit which floated about him, till, drawing together, it became one white flame, and a voice came from the midst of the flame, saying, "Paul, go thou up to Jerusalem before thou settest forth upon the sea; let the Elders—Peter, James, and John—commend thy work, and set the seal of their belief upon the Gospel that thou shalt bear unto the Gentiles."

And Paul, who had no thought of such a journey, was astonished for a short space at the counsel that was thus given him. But, when he spoke of it to Barnabas, the elder brother cried out that it was a revelation that they must obey, that mayhap there were matters of high import that the Three—James, John, and Peter—would impart to them.

There went unto Jerusalem in the company of these twain one whom Paul loved—Titus. Now Titus was of the kin of Luke, on the one side, and, on the other, he was of Greece, so he had not been circumcised and he could not enter into the company of the devout Jews. He sought to serve Paul, who was ailing at times, and had to withdraw himself from the company of men, his sickness being unsightly in their eyes.

In those times, when Luke was not nigh unto Paul, his kinsman, Titus, served him and cherished him. Now, even in those days

tidings had been borne unto certain of the Pharisees who believed in Moses first and in our Lord Christ as in one who was but the fulfilment of the law, that Paul went in unto the Gentiles at Antioch, and lived in the company of the uncircumcised, so they set a watch upon him when he came unto Jerusalem.

It was reported unto my master, of whom I am the scribe, that the father of Paul learned that one of his company named Titus was uncircumcised, and conformed in no manner to the law of Moses. Other charges were made against Paul to Haran, his father.

And he, being one of the sternest of the Pharisees, caused Paul to come unto him, and he strove to search his heart, setting him many questions concerning the law of Moses. In all these matters Paul made answers that were according to the faith of his fathers.

“ Yet thou goest in unto the Gentiles, thou sittest at meat with them,” cried the Elder ; “ thou dost transgress in thy deeds, yet in words thou observest the law of Moses that demandeth of our race that we should hold ourselves apart from the lives of the Gentiles.”

Then Paul declared unto his father, “ For many seasons I have, as thou knowest, held myself apart in Tarsus, preparing myself for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. And it hath been revealed to me by the Holy Spirit that I shall fail if I seek to lay the yoke of the law of Moses upon the Gentiles. I shall but baptise them in the name of our Lord Jesus. Thus shall I win many to belief in the one living God.”

Then was the old man wrathful, and he declared : “ I believe not in this Holy Spirit, in the mystery of this revelation of which thou hast spoken. I have sought to give thee freedom in thy belief. I have set no bridle upon thee, though it grieved me sore that thou soughtest not a high place in the Sanhedrin, that thou no more abodest in Jerusalem, and didst cast from thee the heritage that might have been thine—thy place among the Elders in Israel. Now do I perceive that thy Jesus, whom thou callest the Christ, will overturn our laws and sow division among our people. The hour has come when thou shalt choose between thy father, thy kin, and thy Christ.

“ If thou goest unto the Gentiles in the company of the uncircumcised, and preachest this Gospel of faith, and gatherest within this new sect those who hold not with the law of Moses, I shall cast thee from me, tear thee from my heart as the great wind teareth the roots of a tree from the ground. Thou shalt have no part nor lot in my possessions. I shall not, as I have done heretofore, give

thee moneys so that thou canst live the life of wisdom. From henceforth, if thou heedest me not, thou shalt labour with thy hands and thou shalt eat the bread of affliction ; for my curse shall go with one who, being of my loins, shall turn his face away from the faith of his fathers, and give himself over to the foul living of the Gentiles."

Paul was much afflicted in spirit, and he strove with the old man, entreating him not to lay his curse upon him ; but Haran was as firm of purpose as was his son, and he would not yield to him concerning this matter. He gave orders to his servants that the doors of his house should be shut in the face of his godless son.

Even when his daughter entreated him to pardon the one who would bear his name for him, and was of his seed, he would not yield. So it came to pass that Paul gazed no more upon the face of his father, and it was a great sorrow to him. He wept as he declared unto Titus, in that hour when he was cut off :

" I have given up all for Christ. Do likewise, then mayest thou come with me across the sea and preach the Word to the people who are in darkness. The Spirit hath revealed to me that through faith and not through works, not through the law of Moses, shall the Gentiles be won for Christ."

And Paul went in unto the three fathers of the Church, unto James, Cephas, and John, and he spoke of the revelation that had come unto him upon the breath of God in Tarsus, while he studied the ancient wisdom and the teachings of Christ through many seasons apart from men.

And these three marvelled at the knowledge that Paul revealed unto them, and at his sure judgment of men. They had passed their lives in Judæa, and they knew that they had not the learning that would be needful if they would wrestle with the learned among the Romans and the Greeks.

Then Paul spoke of his desire to win the Gentile to Christ through the words of Christ alone. They were of one accord with him, for they perceived that he had been filled with the Holy Spirit, and they durst not gainsay one who had been bidden in this manner to bear the tidings of the Gospel unto the nations who knew neither Moses nor the Prophets. They gave Paul but one counsel—they bade him remember that the saints were in great need in Jerusalem.

Many hungered in that time, so they bade him seek gifts and moneys for the Church at Jerusalem, so that the Brethren should not perish in those days of need.

I would have ye know that, when the governance of the saints was devised, it was found that they could not share alike, they

could not give up all they possessed to the treasury. It was commanded that each man should render some part of his possessions to the Deacons; so that, there being such measure within the common store, no saint might suffer hunger or perish.

But, when the famine fell upon the Jews, money might not buy food in Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas had borne corn in their train when they journeyed unto Jerusalem from Antioch.

Now Paul assured Peter, James, and John that the faithful would ever be mindful of their Brethren in Jerusalem; that he would cause those whom he won for Christ to believe it was above all things needful that the Church should be one in things of this world, and in the things of the Spirit.

Then the Apostle of Antioch received the blessing of the Three, and took his leave of them. And it came to pass that he tarried a day and a night in Jerusalem because of the hurt that was done to Titus, a loved brother in Christ. The sister of Paul was the wife of one Helib, a Pharisee, who had no liking for the saints and who had set the father of Paul against his son, bearing unto him tidings of the work of Paul among the Gentiles at Antioch.

So, when this Elder learned that Titus, who was of the company of Paul, was uncircumcised, and when he learned that his father-in-law had cast out his first-born, then was he emboldened to seek out, with certain of his servants, the friend of his kinsman.

They set upon Titus when he stood without the Temple, calling him an unbelieving dog, smiting him upon the face, binding him with ropes, and casting him into a ditch without the town.

A traveller heard his lamentation, and took him from the dung-heap upon which he had been cast, bearing him unto the lodging in Jerusalem in which Paul abode.

Then was Paul much angered, and this young Gentile sought to stay his wrath, saying: "Speak not of this unto thy kin. When my bruises are healed, let us go hence from Jerusalem, for, if we tarry, these Pharisees will seek your destruction, and the work of the Lord will be hindered."

So Barnabas, Paul, and Titus went from the Holy City, much uplifted in spirit because the Apostles had blessed them, and had bidden them permit the Gentile, if he was weak in the spirit, to be absolved from the observances of the law of Moses.

CHAPTER XVI

PAUL PLEADS THE CAUSE OF THE GENTILES IN SAMARIA

Now I would write of the council and of the third coming of Paul unto Jerusalem.

The people of Samaria were simple of mind, and they had no liking for the wise men among the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were of Jerusalem. And thus it was that they hailed Paul as a worker of wonders, and were of one accord in their acclamation of him and of Barnabas, praising God for the works these brothers in Christ had wrought among the heathen. The tale of their triumph sped before them, travelling as a bird to the south, and joy was roused among the saints in Jerusalem because of the zeal of these Samaritans, because of the marvels that were told concerning the journeyings of Barnabas and Paul.

Now the glory of man ever stirreth up the beast in man. Certain of the Pharisees who hated Paul gathered together and imagined evil counsel against him. They would confound him with their learning when he came unto the Brethren, and they would demand of the Twelve that the staff of the teacher and preacher should be taken from a Disciple who had, to their mind, become one of the Gentiles and turned from the faith of his fathers.

It was determined, because of the mighty tally of the saints, that the Elders, the Apostles, and the Brethren should give to Barnabas and his company greetings in a wide space, in the country without the city. And Paul, as he prepared himself for this hour when the whole Church of Christ would welcome him, and hearken unto him, was filled with gladness, and he forgot the heaviness of his spirit when he went from Jerusalem with the thought of his father's curse within his mind, destroying his peace and causing him to be weary of living.

When the Three—James, John, and Peter—had blessed him, he lifted up his voice and spoke unto all the saints who were assembled about him. And his words were a stumbling-block, and caused confusion among the Pharisees. For he said unto them : “ I was bidden by James, Cephas, and John to bear the Gospel of Christ unto the Gentiles ; and when I asked of them whether those of the heathen who were weak in the Spirit should observe the law of Moses, should be circumcised, they bade me use my own discretion in this matter, absolving those who were unable to bear the burden of these rites that are holy in our eyes.”

And lo ! Gershon rose up from the midst of the people, charging Paul with falsehood, and demanding of the Elders that they should deny these words of the brother and rebuke him for such evil speaking.

Howsoever, Peter rose up and declared that Paul did not lie, that they had determined, because Paul was one who received the Holy Spirit and was instructed by the Holy One, that he should be free to bind or loose in all that concerned the law of Moses and the teachings of the Prophets.

Then Helib, who was known to be a kinsman of Paul, spoke with much heat and bitterness of the sorrow he had brought unto his father. And he demanded that Paul should be no more chosen to go among the Gentiles and to teach the Gospel of Christ. For he was deceived in his belief that the Holy Spirit had instructed him on this matter ; it was but the messenger of Satan who had ensnared him.

Whereupon Barnabas turned unto the people, saying : " The Spirit hath wrought many miracles through Paul. It caused a cripple to rise up and walk in Lystra. A sorcerer was smitten with blindness in Cyprus. Many were healed by Paul in Iconium. And the multitude were brought unto Christ through the wonder of the words the Spirit spoke through our beloved brother. There are Brethren who came with us from Antioch who are prepared to testify to the works of the Spirit that were wrought through him."

And lo ! Paul raised his hand and gazed upon the Pharisees, asking for silence. They were hushed by the light of his eyes for a short space, and the people marvelled at the radiance of his countenance ; for from it shone the light that cometh from God alone.

And he cried out : " Men and Brethren, who are we that we should despise the Gentile ? Where are our mighty works ? Have we shown the Gentiles that we love them even as our Master Christ bade us love all men ? We have sent unto them teachers, but in naught else have we served them. The wealthy among these despised Gentiles have in times past made rich gifts, sending corn, figs, and wine unto the saints who hungered in Jerusalem in the days of dearth. They have shown us a charity that Christ did command, and what charity have ye shown them ? Ye have not rendered unto them the goods of this world, neither do ye show them the charity of the Spirit. Ye will not loose them from one jot or tittle in the observances of the law.

" Yet they are not fashioned, by reason of the many generations of the heathen that went before them, to bear the full burden of the law. Ye would cast them out from the company of the saints as if

they were dogs. Ye would let them return unto the abominations of idolatry. Ye would cast them once more into darkness, because they have not yet reached the full measure of your strength ; because they have not the heritage of power to practise and observe that came unto you from our fathers. Think well before ye judge the Gentiles who believe in Christ. They are as little children, while ye are like unto grown men. If ye will but have charity they may in time be led to hold with certain parts of the law of Moses. Then, indeed, shall we of the Church of Christ triumph."

And Paul spake of the zeal of the Galatians and of their turning away from lust and evil, of their desire to worship but the one God, to be freed from the bondage of many false gods. But his power to hold in silence the Pharisees failed him as the fire that had been kindled within him became spent, the light of his eyes dying, his body bent with weariness. And there came the warning of sickness to him, the strange cloud that would gather about him at times.

And, seeing that he was failing, the Pharisees raised up their voices once more and cried out that he was a blasphemer, seeking to sow division among the Brethren, to wound and maim the Church of Christ, seeking to overturn belief in the Most High, and destroy the faith of the people of Judæa, the chosen race.

A great clamour arose, and for a short space the multitude would not hearken unto James, who strove to still their crying. And some declared that they would no more believe in Christ if such teachings were to be given forth in His name. And others disputed with them, saying, " Paul hath spoken truly ; we must have patience with these Gentiles, we must let them grow until they be of the full measure of man. Let us be charitable and we shall win them."

And, when the saints had lost somewhat of the heat that first possessed them, they became silent, and hearkened unto the ruling of the father of the Church.

James spoke unto them, saying : " This teaching of the law of Moses is a matter of grave import. We may not give judgment upon it now. We shall pray that the Holy Spirit may come unto us and reveal the will of God to His people. Dispute not with one another concerning this matter. For then shall we become a shame and a byword among our enemies. They will point the finger of scorn at us. So go in all soberness unto your homes, and leave unto the Apostles and the Elders the judgment in this matter."

Then James lifted up his hand and blessed the multitude ; and they obeyed him, going unto their dwellings in all quietness and holding their peace, speaking not even to their wives of the grave dissension that had arisen among the Brethren.

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER MUCH DEBATE PAUL IS GIVEN POWER TO FREE THE GENTILES
FROM THE OBSERVANCES OF THE LAW

AND James, being wise in his knowledge of what swayed the hearts of men, in the day when the saints assembled together, bade Gershon and the brother-in-law of Paul first speak of the trouble which had caused many hearts to burn, and had made certain of the weaker Brethren to fall away from faith.

Now Paul's brother-in-law was a poor speaker, and he did but maintain again and yet again that Paul had been corrupted by the Gentiles, and had lived according to their loose manner ; that he had been the last and greatest sorrow to his noble father ; that he was a blasphemer, and should be cut off from the Church, cast out from among them.

When he had ended, Gershon spoke as a learned Pharisee and related unto the multitude the acts of Abraham, Isaac, Moses, and all the Prophets. And they were wearied by the heaviness of his tale, for the Spirit was not in him, and he spoke as a Scribe who recited the text he writeth in a manner that escapeth the ear. For the thoughts of the Scribe are often far from his writing.

And when Gershon had spoken there arose other Pharisees, and in their vehement anger they declared that Paul was a malefactor, and that he sought to destroy the nation of the Jews by striving, with the guile of the serpent, to uproot the faith of their fathers by sowing dissension among them in this manner. "Thou art the tool of the Roman," they cried. "Thou art the curse that cometh stealthily by night, that ever beareth, by subtle devices, ruin to our people."

And the multitude did make a hiss at Paul, and their murmuring had the anger of a crackling fire in its sound.

Doubt, like a crafty enemy, stole within the hearts of many who had heretofore steadfastly upheld the Apostle of Antioch in all his words and doings. So, when Peter raised his hand for silence, he felt that the whole multitude were set against the words he desired to utter. Yet he did not falter or fail, for he had rued that hour in Antioch when it had seemed needful, for the sake of the Church, that he should turn his face away from Paul.

And he spoke unto the saints in this wise : "In past days, when I was doubtful, and believed that the law of Moses was greater than the teaching of Christ, I prayed unto the Lord for guidance. And

He sent the Holy Spirit unto me and showed me that I might judge no man, common or unclean." And Peter spoke of the vision that had been granted unto him, and of Cornelius and those Gentiles of his company. These had been filled with the Spirit, and had spoken in many tongues. These had prophesied and praised God, yet were they uncircumcised, and they would not conform to the law of Moses.

"The Gentiles cannot bear the burden of works," cried Peter. "They are not of our race, and we may not ask them to conform to what hath been too hard for many Jews. I would let you read the secrets of my heart. I would open all the chambers of my life to you. I do in this hour declare that the burden of the law hath been too heavy for me. If I fail, wherefore should I demand of the Gentiles that they should practise what hath been beyond my strength?"

And there were many in the multitude who were won by this confession of the saint—by his humility, by the manner in which he had laid bare to them the secrets of his heart. For it was the custom with some of the Jews to crush down into the silence those weaknesses which had caused them to fail many times in the observances in the Temple. And they had oft buried their shame as a man burieth his gains in the earth, so that no man may count them and gaze upon them reproachfully.

Now James called on Barnabas to recount the tale of his journeyings among the heathen. And first he spoke of Paphos, and of that night when evil men who worshipped the foul Aphrodite had bound himself and Mark unto the pillars in the temple of the goddess, and had committed abominations in their presence, threatened them with the murder of their eyes, so that they might no more look upon the light of the sun. And how God had sent a quaking of the earth, causing the temple to be riven asunder, causing the pillars to fall. And how He had thus delivered His chosen with a strong hand, casting out the evil men, confounding them when they were in the midst of their abominations.

And Barnabas told of the dryness of the earth in Iconium, and of the miracle of the water which had been wrought through him. He spoke of the zeal of the Phrygians and the Galatians, of their simple faith in Christ Jesus, and of their charity to one another.

"We who are Jews hold ourselves to be purer and nearer to God than any other people," was his word, "yet we are filled with malice and uncharitableness. Though we have within us the learning and the wisdom of the generations of the Prophets, we contend with one another, and are farther from grace than many of the Gentiles

of Galatia, who have become members of the Church of Christ and are brothers in the Lord.”

Paul, who had been ailing, now rose up in the midst of the Brethren. And those who looked on him whispered to one another that death was casting its shadows about him, for he had been shaken and spent since the marks upon his body had opened and his blood had flowed forth.

These marks were not hid by his robe and his sandals. He spoke softly in the first moments, like one who is afar off on some mountains and haileth his brother in the valley. Yet all the people were still ; they whispered not to one another ; they were in awe of the ghastliness that was imaged in the countenance of this Apostle.

Howbeit, as he continued speaking, his voice drew nigh unto them once more. It was no longer a far-off cry. He was like unto one speaking in the midst of them, and shaken with the violence and power of a great spirit.

He spoke of the days in Antioch, in Pisidia, and of the people without number who would gather about him and hearken unto him, so that there were times when those who were not nigh unto him heard no sound, but were content to wait and gather up the whispered words of his teaching passed from mouth to mouth.

And Paul caused those who were tender of heart to weep when he spoke of the affliction of his body, and of the manner in which the stranger in Lystra gave him shelter and succour. “ And these devout persons,” he cried, “ who are thus filled with the love that is of Christ, ye would cast from you, because they are not circumcised, because they worship not according to our manner. It is by faith and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye will win the Gentile. And, at a later time, when he hath greater knowledge, he will seek to observe the law of Moses. But ye may not compel men ; ye cannot lay upon them what seemeth in their eyes a bondage ; ye can but win them by example. Ye will never win them by threats or by commands.”

And he told them of the man who had been healed in Lystra. He spoke of the stoning in that town, and of his own death, and of that grievous hour when Stephen had appeared unto him, and had bidden him once more enter within the clay. For he must, in affliction, in suffering, in perils by sea and by land, accomplish the work which he had caused to be wrested from Stephen by his early dying in the bloom of his years. And Paul confessed his shame, and declared his purpose to win for Christ the heathen for whom Stephen had first been chosen by the Spirit.

And the people cried out that they believed in the work and the words of their brother in Christ. They were with him in all matters, and he should not be bound by the Pharisees. Then did Paul, who had held these people through the invisible power of his Body of Light and through the Spirit, fall back and lie as one who is so spent naught can raise him up or break the spell of his weariness.

James perceived that Paul was overwrought, and that he could not dispute further with his enemies. So the chief among the Twelve gave his judgment forthwith. And he declared that Paul would receive the blessing of the Twelve, and that they would, in certain matters, give him power to free the Gentiles, but that in all that pertained to purity of living they should be bound if they were to be baptised and become members of the Church of Christ.

So it came to pass that the Apostle of the West was justified, and his enemies confounded, in that hour. And the saints were directed to pray for Paul and Barnabas when they set forth once more to labour among the heathen and those who knew not God.

THE THIRD PARCHMENT

FOREWORD

GIVEN BY THE MESSENGER OF CLEOPHAS

I WOULD write of the vision of the man of Macedonia. Ye know not that this dream that was given unto Paul was a matter of high import, and it signifieth much to the learned through the ages, for it showeth that all the wisdom of man is but as a grain of sand when ye liken it to the Wisdom Eternal. Out of that vision sprang the first Churches of the West, and, though Paul knew it not, it drew him for ever from out the narrow fold of Judæa. The door was opened to all the nations by the vision of the man of Macedonia.

Now Paul, Silas, and Timothy were in Galatia, bearing to the Churches in the cities of that province the decrees of the Apostles ; and, when all had been visited, Paul was filled with the design to teach in Ephesus, the great sea-town where there was much wickedness, where the foul worship of the ancient gods was rife.

Howbeit, Paul would not adventure upon this work without guidance from the Spirit, so he sought the quiet in which the voice of God is heard ; and he fell into that muse which is needful when the man casteth forth his invisible shape, his Body of Light.

Ye know that Paul ever declared there was another, an Invisible One, who was in the body yet not in the body, One caught up into the Heavens. This was indeed his Body of Light, in which he might travel beyond space and time and memory.

THE THIRD PARCHMENT

CHAPTER I

PAUL TOLD TO GO TO PREACH IN MACEDONIA: THE BRETHREN
CONVERSE CONCERNING THE BODY ON THE VOYAGE TO NEAPOLIS

I WOULD on this eve show you how the door was opened to the nations of the West by the Apostle of Antioch.

It was on this wise. Paul, Silas, and Timothy bore unto the people of Phrygia and Galatia the decrees of the Twelve. They assembled the Brethren together in the cities, Elders were elected, and they taught the Gentiles according to the word of the Master.

Now Paul desired, above all things, to go unto Ephesus, where many worshipped false gods, and where the Jews fell away from the faith of their fathers; but he would not seek out this city until the Holy Spirit had spoken unto him, until the Hour of the Watch had been kept.

I have told thee that there is given to each man an invisible shape, a Body of Light, and, if the man willeth with all his might, he may cast forth the shape of light, and the Great Spirit will enter therein and manifest himself unto the man.

Now Paul had in his company Silas and Timotheus, and he bade them keep the Hour of the Watch with him, so that he might know the will of the Spirit. At his bidding, they kneeled and joined hands in prayer, in a quiet chamber, far from men. And Paul fell into a swoon, lying as one dead, casting forth his shape of light, while the Brethren prayed without speech, and silence gathered about them, as the silence in the heart of a lake.

Now Timotheus had not ever before kept the Hour of the Watch, so he was afraid. But dread passed from his soul when the stillness passed, and when the watchers heard the sweeping of great winds about the house. And there was the sound as of the roaring of seas in their ears, so that wonder and awe smote them, and they cast themselves upon their faces before the flame that burned above the head of Paul, who lay wrapped in his swoon, as still as the rock in the earth.

And, after a short space, all sound died. The flame faded, and the watchers raised their faces from the ground once more.

Timotheus gazed at Paul, and whispered unto his brother, "The wind hath bound his soul up in her wings." But Silas made a sign unto him, signifying that there should be no word uttered until the sleeper waked.

And there came a change in that chamber. The light fled once more, and the accursed thing did enter therein. And the Brethren, feeling its presence, wrestled with it and prayed, and they fought with the shadow of an older night than the night of the sun.

For when man seeketh what is good, the Hosts of Evil are ever roused, and do contend against him.

But the prayers of Silas and Timotheus guarded Paul in that dread hour, and when he stirred once more all evil had passed from the chamber.

And he spoke unto them, saying: "I was caught up into that Heaven where reigneth the unsearchable mystery, and word hath been given me which is strange indeed. I may not preach in Asia, and the Holy One hath bidden me hasten westwards, not halting by the way, or seeking to preach the Word unto the people."

And on the morrow, when they set forth at the bidding of the Spirit, Paul was sore cast down and perplexed, for the Hour of the Watch had not borne unto him the tidings he desired, and he knew not what lay before him.

But Timotheus and Silas were light of heart. Joy came to them as the bird's song in the morning, and it was with them all the day, abiding in their memory.

And they journeyed westwards and then northwards; and still was Paul sore cast down and perplexed in mind, for he knew naught of the deep purpose of the Spirit.

And, as they journeyed in haste, the heat of the sun overcame him and sickness fell upon him, that old enemy that had tormented him through many seasons. Then he prayed unto the Lord to put an end to his doubts, to send him some counsel that would cause the darkness to pass from his mind. In his sickness he thought of Luke, who had tended him before in his journeyings. Howbeit, Luke had gone from his company, and in those early days he had not been much with him. But now Paul yearned for this healer who could comfort him with his speech as well as with his cooling herbs. And, because no word was given unto them, Paul determined to go to Bithynia and preach the Gospel in that region.

So, when the sickness had left him, they set forth upon the road to this province; and, in the heat of the day, they sought shelter

and rest. In that hour Paul could not sleep ; he bethought him of his backslidings in other days ; and he pondered upon his past wickednesses, wondering whether it was the will of the Lord that he should no more preach His Gospel to the Gentile. The fear that he was not worthy possessed his soul, giving him no rest. So he roused his companions, bidding them set forth with him upon their journey into Bithynia.

And, when Paul faced the road, he perceived one that barred his path. Tall and straight was this man, gentle was his face, and on it was a strange peace, as of one who had lived and suffered all the sorrows of man since the days of Adam.

And this figure stood between Paul and the road to Bithynia. And the saint cast himself down in the dust, crying out, " Master, Thou hast come unto me once more, Thou hast answered my prayer though I am all unworthy."

Timotheus and Silas saw naught, but they knew that Paul was in the presence of some Holy One.

And he was charged to tell no man of this vision, and a voice spoke, saying : " Paul, this is not the last time I come unto thee. I bear thee a charge. Thou shalt preach unto a fierce people, a people of deep speech, of a stammering tongue. And they shall have understanding of thee. Set not foot in Bithynia, but go westward as thou hast been commanded."

And the figure vanished—there was but the stillness of noonday about them.

The saint spoke of the charge that had been given him, so they turned back once more upon the road ; and, when evening came, they halted in the evil town of Artemaia, and that night they lodged there, but they had been bidden not to preach in those parts. Yet was Paul sorely tempted when, on the morrow, he perceived the people going in procession to their goddess, and bearing images of her upon their breasts.

Paul besought the Lord to permit him to go among this multitude. And he prayed in the silence, but no voice answered, no word came. For the Spirit goeth where it listeth, and no man may summon it, or tell the hour of its coming. He can but open his heart to receive it.

It came to pass that the company of the saints shook the dust of this town off their feet, and they travelled westward, bearing letters to certain Jews in the region of Troas.

And when Paul perceived the sea the doubt as to his work came upon him once more. Many times had he prayed for light since the road to Bithynia had been barred to him. But no light was given, nor could he enter into that state beyond time and space and memory

again, for the power was not with him ; and vainly had he, in the company of Silas and Timotheus, kept the Hour of the Watch in Artemaia.

Now the Brethren were weary ; and so they were in heavy sleep, resting in a barn in the town of Troas, when Paul perceived a change in the darkness about him. And the eyes of his inner being were opened, and there stood before him the one for whom he had greatly yearned, the physician who had tended him in a past time.

Yet he was strange in his manner, and his body and shape seemed light as air, and not solid as the flesh of man.

And Paul gave him glad greetings, but, when he would have taken his hands, Luke drew from him, saying : " I visit thee in sleep, bearing the message of my people. Come over into Macedonia and help us. It is in that region the work of the Lord awaits ye. Behold, this is the bidding of the Spirit."

And, as the words were uttered, Luke passed hence, and a deep sleep overcame Paul, so that it was not until the morrow that he waked to the new charge that had been delivered unto him.

When he went forth from the sleeping-place, the master of the house came unto him, saying, " There is one without who seeketh thee, and would hold speech with thee."

Then was Paul led into the presence of Luke, of the one whom he had desired above all others in his sickness ; and, when they had given each other greeting, Paul asked the saint if he had been with him in the hours of the night.

The saint made answer that he had come unto Troas from Macedonia, and that he had no knowledge of Paul and the Brethren till that very hour when one of his kin had spoken of the strangers who lodged with Sheva the Jew. And, learning their titles, and learning also that they had come from Antioch, he had sought them forthwith.

And when Paul spoke of his dream, Luke was much amazed, perceiving in it the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In that very hour they determined they would take ship for Macedonia, and seek to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in that land.

They spoke of their design to Sheva, and asked him to give them counsel concerning the ships that traded and came and went between Macedonia and Troas, and whether he had kin in Greece and would give them letters unto those who were of his race.

Howbeit Sheva, though he believed in Christ, desired that they should not preach the Gospel in those lands, but that they should abide in Troas. So he uttered dark speech concerning Greeks and Macedonians and the many evil practices of these Gentiles.

Then was Luke roused to wrath, and he spoke with bitterness to this brother, saying : " The people of Athens are evil ; they are like unto the children of Israel, who raised up gods of gold and worshipped them in the ancient days. Many are the images they have set up, and foul are the lives of this people. But the men of Macedonia yearn for God and desire a teacher, one who will bear unto them the truths that were hidden until Christ came into the world and revealed them unto us. You are unjust and speak falsely if you contend that the people of Macedonia are like unto the Greeks who are of Athens."

And Luke continued speaking with such heat that Sheva was overcome and was shamed, so that he sought out a shipmaster who served him ; and he bade this man bear the Brethren in his vessel unto Neapolis, and that he should treat them with all honour, as they were the guests of Sheva.

As the Jew owned in part the vessel of the shipmaster, he might not be gainsaid. And the Brethren gave thanks unto this merchant, bidding him farewell ; and, because he was cast down at their not tarrying in that region, they promised that one of them should come unto Troas at a future time and spread the teaching of the Gospel among the Jews in that town.

On another eve I would tell ye of the words the Brethren uttered concerning the worship of idols, concerning the three orders of life in the body, concerning that grace that winneth man from the beast and the body, persuading him to pass from that death ye call life, that torment when the soul continually yieldeth itself up to the fret of being, to the pains of the flesh.

The Brethren shall talk of that putting on of Christ, of that loosing of the garment of mortality, so that, even though it still may cover you, it may not confine or restrain you, bind you down so that you are a prey to every ill, to every sorrow. For it is possible that man may win to the joy of the Spirit, to that peace that passeth understanding, while he beareth the burden of the body.

Yet is the burden, through that freedom from what is carnal, light as the air about the drifting swallows.

Now all boded well for the travellers. The sea was smooth and dark, and the wind in no way unfavourable. The sun smiled upon them, and peace reigned in the hearts of the Brethren ; and Silas, Timothy, and Paul gathered about Luke and spoke with him concerning the call that had come unto them to preach the Word to the Gentile. They questioned him concerning his design in coming unto Troas from his own land.

And he made answer, "I have long desired that the Gospel should be borne unto my people. I have watched them these many days, and I have perceived that they yearned for the truth, yet they could not find it; for they are living in the darkness of ignorance, in the kingdom of the blind.

"I prayed unto my God daily and nightly that the Word of the Spirit should be borne unto them, that they should be redeemed from sin and from this bondage of ignorance. I am slow of speech, I have no words when I face the multitude, or I should have spoken boldly unto my people concerning Christ. There are few Jews in Philippi, yet they are devout, and they will be well inclined towards you.

"But those of my people whose need is sore are Gentiles, and I have heard them speak of the breaking up of this old world, of its passing away into the shadows because of the evil that increaseth and waxeth wherever men are in great numbers.

"And so weary was I of the speech of this people, I prayed with all my might for guidance. And behold, one morning as I arose there was cast into my mind the purpose that I should journey into Antioch in Syria and seek out the saints. I feared that they might not come unto my people, because the name of corruption hath been set upon them and upon all Greeks. Yet, so urgent was the voice within me, I could not be unmindful of it, and I took ship for Troas, thinking that I might seek out Sheva and ask his counsel. For he hath been in Antioch and in Jerusalem, and he believed in the Master."

And Paul questioned Luke concerning all the nations in those lands to which they were bound. Luke assured him that he would be welcome in Philippi, because many perceived the decay of men in that city, and they, believing that the end of the world was at hand, would hearken to the words of Paul and Silas.

"So shall ye prevail with them," he said. "They yearn for the truth and the light. Their learned men possess not the store of knowledge that is the inheritance of the teachers in Athens. So they will not hinder you with cunning speech, with false subtilties, nor will they twist about you the rope of windy discourse.

"They have open hearts and the desire for knowledge. Ye shall be received with all honour; but the minds of the learned men of Athens will be closed against you. Go not unto them, for they hold that they are the salt of the earth, that all knowledge is theirs. So, if ye contend against them, their words will be as grapes of gall.

"They have no belief, no faith in aught save the evil of this

world ; their speech will be as the poison of dragons, if ye seek to spread the tidings of the Gospel in their city.

“ And the multitude, who have not their knowledge, are delivered over to the worship of images, and to the foulness of living which is begotten by the worship of shapes of stone, of marble and ebony and gold.”

Then Silas cried out : “ Let us not abide in Macedonia ; let us go forthwith unto Athens.” And he turned unto Paul in great eagerness, saying : “ Master, thou shalt destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves. Thus it is written in the Scriptures, and thus it shall again be fulfilled, so that once more testimony shall be rendered unto the living God.

“ Oft-times I have heard tell of the abominations that are practised by the people of Athens. Certain of the Jews from Athens, who come up to Jerusalem, have told me that this mighty city is like unto Sodom in its wickedness, that all within it have turned their faces away from God. There is no health in them ; they seek after the lusts of the flesh, and mock at those who would live chastely and follow virtuous ways.”

Now Paul had hearkened in silence to the Brethren, and he scarce seemed to heed them, so still was he, his eyes set upon the dark waters and the passing birds.

Howsoever, he lifted up his hands, casting them towards the west, saying : “ All the Gentiles live in sin ; not one among them is pure. We may not judge the people of Athens before we judge ourselves, for few even among the Jews possess the grace of the Spirit, that pure loveliness that is of God alone. All have sinned, for it is in their nature to sin. Journey back with me unto the beginning of time, when God made the world and saw that it was good.

“ Three orders of beings He fashioned. First were there the stones and metals ; these ye may perceive, yet they do not beget, neither do they grow or die. The second order begetteth, and groweth, and perisheth after its day is overpast. The plants and the beasts are of this kind. These have no reason within them ; they are vacant of mind and without understanding. To the third order hath been given a glittering sword, and it may cleave in twain the one who wields it, utterly destroying him. Man is its bearer, and this sharp weapon is the knowledge of good and evil, which hath pursued him through all the years, through all the generations. It is his torment and his joy.

“ Now man is not one, but two, by reason of the peculiar gift that God hath given him. The beast hath no knowledge of evil,

for he hath not understanding ; so is the beast not the prey of the Evil One, as man is his prey.

“ It hath been written that knowledge increaseth sorrow. That is only when man is carnally minded, when he is given over to the lusts of the flesh ; and in these last days the flesh and the body wholly govern the man. Wherefore God hath chosen this time to send His only Son into the world, that men might, through His death upon the cross, be freed from the bondage of death and become heirs of the Kingdom of God.

“ For all are gone astray, all are governed by the beast that is in them ; and only through the Gospel of our Master Christ may they be freed from this death. Through it they may learn so to subdue the evil—of which they make a counterpart in their graven images—that they become unmindful of pain and fret and every ill, that they so master themselves that they enter into the sure peace of the Spirit. And then to them the body is naught, for the grace of God is wholly theirs, causing them to be born again ; causing them, while still upon the earth, to be in no way subject to the creature ; to be the children of light, partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Now Timothy was well instructed in the teaching of certain of the learned Greeks, and he spoke unto Paul, saying : “ Wouldst thou have us hold in shame our bodies ? There are some in these lands to which we are bound who cry out against the vileness of their bodies, even though they know naught of God. If, in truth, our bodies are a shame to us, then should we, according to such rule, slay ourselves, and thus free the Spirit from the chain that may bind it to Satan.”

And Paul made answer : “ Hold not your body in shame unless it be foul through evil doing. Command it, regarding it as being given for your trial, so that ye may wrestle with it and so order it that your spirit is its master and not its slave.”

And he continued, saying : “ I have learned from travellers that the multitude in these lands, even in their idolatry, even in their uncleanness and fornication, seek ignorantly after God. But so fearful are they, they see in all the elements gods, and what they perceive are but vain images. They cannot sift the false from the true. Yet is their desire to know what is of God, and even their learned men would fain have understanding of the Creator of all things.

“ They search for God through meditation and in solitary days. They know not that through faith and through love for their neighbour they shall find Him. It is my purpose to gather together in each city both Jew and Gentile, and cause them to worship the

Master, cause them to break down the wall that standeth between my people and those of other nations. For the Kingdom of God may only be drawn to earth if all are gathered within His Covenant. And, if many abode without, then would it be hard for those within to fashion and build the Kingdom of Christ, which is the sign of the Spirit, as the Empire of Rome is the sign of the body."

And now the Brethren were all hushed, for the tints of the sea were darkened, and they perceived land upon its outermost edge. So they knelt together, offering up a prayer in silence, asking for guidance in this new world that would soon be spread before them.

CHAPTER II

THE TEACHING AT PHILIPPI AND THE SLANDER OF THEMESIUS

ALL the night the vessel abode nigh to the island of Samothrace, and on the morrow they sailed unto the mainland ; and in Neapolis they set their feet upon the earth once more. It was a town of no great size, and Paul would not abide within it. For his zeal had eaten him up with the desire to spread the tidings of the Master in the famed city of Philippi.

Few Jews abode in that town. It was no great mart for trading, and those children of Judæa who were of it had forgotten much that concerned their faith and their race. Yet was this well, for they were not minded to dispute with Paul. And one named Elkana gave them glad greeting when he learned they were of Jerusalem.

He was one who had workers for hire, and he took Silas into his service, yet he had no place for Paul and Timothy. Howbeit they were of good heart. For this old man, who was a friend of Luke, sheltered them in those first days, though he could not give them work, and they did not lie upon the cold ground 'neath the stars, which might have been their lot ; they possessed naught save the coats they wore, their staff and script, as Christ had commanded them.

And they went softly among the people, seeking those who might hearken to their words ; and these they summoned to a quiet glade nigh to the river. There they spoke concerning the Messiah, and their tidings were strange in the ears of the Macedonians.

And certain women came to hearken to their teaching. For

great was their freedom in this city. They might come and go and trade with men, and they were resolute, firm of speech, and without fear. Paul was troubled at first by the boldness of their manners ; they questioned him as a learned Pharisee might question, setting before him hard sayings. And he rebuked them for this unseemly hardihood, saying : “ Ye speak of matters that neither slaves nor women can understand. Ye should not in any manner be froward, seeking in humbleness of heart to hearken in silence to the Word of the Lord.”

A woman named Lydia, who wore rich garments and came unto Paul in the company of her slaves, made answer : “ Master, how may we know the manner in which we shall measure our humbleness, if we are not permitted to question thee and obtain from thee the store of wisdom that thou bearest within thee from Judæa. All my days have I longed for the teacher who would give unto us the truth concerning God and the life to come. Therefore do not spurn us ; but be patient, so that we may become the followers of this Jesus whom ye call the Christ.”

And Paul perceived that this woman had far greater understanding than the women of Tarsus or of Judæa. She had learned from a Rabbi much that concerned the practices of the Jews and their belief in Jehovah. So he rebuked her no more, but sought to speak of all the sayings and doings of Christ which he had harvested in his heart.

There was a man named Themesius, who came unto the place of prayer by the river. He was a Macedonian who was much in the company of the Romans, and he hearkened unto Paul, not because of the teaching of the saint, but because Lydia sought him out and spoke of the marvel of his words.

Now Themesius desired Lydia in marriage, for he coveted her many possessions, and she had been inclined unto him until the Brethren made entry into Philippi.

From the hour she hearkened unto Paul and Silas she was, to the mind of this Macedonian, bewitched. She would talk of naught but the words of the strangers. She would not in any manner please Themesius, dealing with him as if he were a stock or a stone. So he was greatly set against the saints, and plotted their undoing.

Howbeit, all spoke well of them ; and so great was the press on the Sabbath, when they taught by the riverside, that it was needful that they should continue their teaching when evening was come, not ceasing till dumbness from much speaking and a heavy weariness fell upon them.

Now Themesius went unto Elkana and spoke evilly concerning

the saints, telling him that they came into that city to trouble the minds of the people, so that they might be set against the Romans and against their customs.

And when Elkana would not credit his words he bade him attend the gathering by the river on the Sabbath. And there, after Paul had spoken for a short space, Themesius sought to set a snare of words for him, saying: "Master, thou speakest of one God and of His Son, Jesus, who came into the world to redeem man from sin, and I have learned from thee that He was hanged upon a tree, and that it was under the rule of the Roman that He was thus done to death. Thou wouldst have us believe that God came to earth in the guise of a malefactor, and, further, thou wouldst set upon high—above the Emperor—one who died this shameful death. Thou deniest, therefore, that the Emperor is the God of all the earth? Thou seekest to overturn the rule of the Mighty One, before whom all should bow. Ye are in very truth blasphemers and mockers."

Then Silas arose and made answer, saying: "Pilate, the Roman Governor, spoke with Jesus our Master, and he greatly marvelled at the wisdom of His words. He was so smitten by His judgment, so stirred by His presence, that he commanded all who were about him to withdraw.

"And a slave, who watched, hath related unto us that this Governor bowed himself before the Master, crying out, 'Of a truth God is with Thee. Thou art holy. Thou are not of this earth. I would beseech Thee, therefore, to use of Thy great power and vanish from this chamber, passing through the multitude, and shaking the dust of Jerusalem from off Thy feet.

"These Priests and Rulers are jealous of Thee, and if I do not please them they will raise up such tumult among the Jews that blood will be shed, and I shall be a shame among my own people and will suffer at their hands.'

"And Jesus, our Master, bade Pontius Pilate to be of good cheer, for it was written that He should give His life as a ransom for many, and therefore the Roman should not withhold Him, but should surrender His body to those jealous men who desired His life. For the clay of the body was naught, and through its torment would the Scriptures be fulfilled.

"Then was Pilate bewildered in mind, for he perceived that Jesus was of God, and he could not understand what was to him a riddle of words. He took counsel with certain other Romans who were of his following, and then he went before the people and declared that Jesus was a just man and innocent of evil doing. And, so that the blood of this man, who was without sin, should not be laid

to his count, he washed his hands in the presence of those who demanded that Christ should be crucified."

And Silas spoke of the rising of the Master on the third day from the tomb, of His exhortation to the Twelve when He came among them ; and he spoke of the miracles which had won all the hearts of the people—miracles wrought by Him before fear possessed the Rulers—and this fear, being the seed of jealousy, had caused them to seek the death of the Master.

Here did Paul take up the word, and declared unto the people that it was needful that Jesus, the Son of God, should die for them. Only through this sacrifice might they be redeemed from death and Hell.

And the Philippians were much moved when Paul spoke of the pardon for all that Christ had borne unto men. They pressed eagerly about the saints, and Themesius perceived that he had failed to ensnare the Brethren. Then was he angered ; he shot out a lip at Paul and Silas, deriding them, flinging base words at them, declaring that they were traitors who sought the undoing of the rule of the magistrates, and that they should be cast forth from the town.

Certain of the people turned cold brows upon him, but others wavered, drawing away and murmuring among themselves ; and one of them was Elkana. He was a man with a fretful heart, and he feared lest he had erred in giving shelter to these strangers. So he plucked Themesius by the sleeve, drawing him apart and questioning him concerning his knowledge of these three who lodged in his dwelling.

And Themesius sought with slander and lies, that were twisted as a serpent's body, to set the old man against the saints. And he caused such dismay and dread to enter into the mind of Elkana that he promised to close his doors to these strangers.

CHAPTER III

LYDIA AND SILAS : MEDITATION OVER PHILIPPI : THE BRETHREN FIND SHELTER WITH A SLAVE

Now when the people who gathered about Paul and Silas were dispersed, there still stayed in their presence certain of the women who had hearkened unto the Brethren when they first taught on the Sabbath by the riverside.

Lydia and Syntiche were among these devout persons, and Lydia

was filled with zeal. Themesius had kindled the torch of faith within her. His words, which he had designed for her beguiling, for the leading of her away from the saints, did but win her and bind her the more closely to the doctrines taught by them.

Now she desired to find favour in their sight; for she believed that they bore with them the teaching that would heal the souls of all men and preserve the Macedonians from the decay and from the corruption that were stealthily spreading among them.

She asked of Paul what were the chief virtues, those that Jesus, his Lord, commended. And he made answer: "Charity and love. More beautiful are these than wisdom, more beautiful even than the respect and duty which are still held in much esteem by certain of the Greeks and Romans."

Then was Lydia rejoiced in heart, and she bade the saints unto her dwelling, where was set out food and raiment; and these, she told the saints, were set apart by her for the poor.

And behold, her gates were opened unto them; and the beggars pressed within, each man and woman who had naught receiving his share when the servant of this good woman had borne testimony to their need.

And Paul learnt that when Lydia dwelt in Thyatira she had been instructed in the faith of the Hebrews, and she had desired to follow out their observances. In many things she was ignorant, and she had confused certain of their practices, but she had drawn from what knowledge she had obtained the sure belief that she should render unto the poor the firstfruits of her possessions.

In those days, when she dwelled at Thyatira, she had no great possessions, but she was a skilful needlewoman, and she had perceived that the colours of many of the cloths that were fashioned into garments perished. So she sought, in the study of herbs, in the study of juices, to devise some means whereby richness of hue could be procured for the raiment of the Greeks, they being a people who delighted in joyful apparel.

And it came to pass that Lydia communed with certain of the weavers in her city. After much searching she was able to procure the purple that the people of Macedonia loved, but, because of its costliness, cannot obtain unless they possess great wealth or much treasure.

Then did Lydia prosper; and, though she gave of the firstfruits of her labour to the poor, yet her possessions and her slaves increased. And she and her husband went unto Philippi, where they hired workers who were skilful in the weaving of cloths, and in the colouring of the robes and tunics that were worn in those days.

Howbeit, there cometh ever, as the companion of joy in the life of man, a dark brother whose name is sorrow; and he is to all as the shadow is to the body. And though for a while ye take no note of it, yet shall ye, in some hour when the light passeth, perceive this dark brother of tears.

So, when Lydia had dwelt but for a season in Philippi, her husband, whom she loved, sickened and died. Then was she distraught, and only the joy of her charity could console her for this grievous sorrow.

The passing of her beloved led her to desire the more earnestly knowledge of the world to come, of the life everlasting. And behold, the saints bore unto her that wisdom, that sure hope for which she had greatly yearned.

When the beggars were all gone from her dwelling Silas blessed her, telling her that she observed the teachings of the Master Christ and was in truth His faithful servant. Then did they take their leave of her so that they might seek out Luke.

And, having come to this brother, they spoke with him concerning the fervour of the Macedonians. And they were exceedingly glad because the Lord had opened the eyes of this people, and there was the promise of a goodly harvest to be gathered from among them for the service of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The saints went unto a high place nigh the city, where they took counsel with one another concerning the Church they would raise up in that town, and concerning those who were of good report, who might become Elders and Rulers if the Spirit so willed it. Then, when all was determined, silence gathered about them, and they fell into a holy muse.

The evening was fair, the sun like some gorgeous bird spreading its wings of gold about Philippi. And, gazing upon the roofs of the houses, the streets, the glinting streak of the river, Luke cried out, "It is a city of beauty, a city to catch the heart!"

And Paul softly admonished him, saying: "This city is as thy love. It is dear to thee as the hole in the hills is to the fox, as the nest to the young bird. Yet thou shalt, with the passing of the years, give of thy love to all the cities of men, not holding one dearer than another, seeing, even in the evil towns, beauty, and finding, among the most wicked of men, nobleness of heart."

Paul spoke further, saying: "I seek not to rebuke thee for this pride of thine in Philippi, for still Tarsus is dear to me above all other cities. And I am weak in the flesh when my mind turneth towards it, and I yearn for it, desiring to live in that town of wondrous learning, where the wise commune with one another, where there is

much that would rejoice the heart. Yet it is needful that I should not abide in any place, but that all my days should be spent in journeyings to and fro, for short is the term of my life and great is the work that lies before me. There are times when I fear that my flesh shall fail, that I shall be no true husbandman of the Lord's."

They spoke no more with one another, seeking the road to the dwelling of Elkana. For the night was gathering about Philippi, and their host desired ever that his doors should be closed at sunset.

Howbeit, when they came unto his house they could not enter within it. All was fast shut, and no voice made answer when they called. They were perplexed and dismayed, and turned about, seeking tidings from a neighbour who was also a Jew.

And he said unto them: "Elkana hath given me this command to bear to you. Ye shall no more enter within his house, nor shall ye sit at his board. For he hath learned that ye seek to overthrow what is the rule and custom of this city. Ye will cause trouble, and tumult will arise within its borders if ye go not hence. He hath learned many evil things concerning you. So let you not abide in this street, but leave us in peace, for we would not have the ordinances of our people, nor the rule of the Magistrates, troubled by you."

Now were the saints disturbed in mind. They feared that some enemy sought their undoing. And Luke, who dwelt with one of his kin, could not offer them shelter, for the dwelling was strait and narrow. Yet they were in no way provoked because they had no lodgment for the night. "The stars shall be our candles," declared Timothy; "we shall suffer no hurt if we rest without the town among the olives."

And lo! as they passed down the street one came unto them in mean attire, and cast himself before them, saying: "I have hearkened unto you, and I have believed in your words of truth, and your speech concerning all being one in Christ Jesus hath caused me great gladness of heart. For your Christ is therefore the God of both bond and free.

"And now, masters, if I have found favour in your sight, I would beseech you to share with me my shelter and the straw whereon I lie. I am but the slave of a merchant, yet shall ye in no way suffer hurt if ye deign to abide within the sleeping-place that is given to me for this night."

And the bondman, who watched over certain possessions of his master, led the brethren to the place of his watch. There did they find shelter and warmth, for it was winter, and the chill of the night increased with the passing of the hours.

CHAPTER IV

LYDIA COMMUNES WITH HERSELF AND DETERMINES TO BE BAPTISED :
HER INTERVIEW WITH THEMESIUS : SHE SHELTERS THE BRETHREN

Now when the saints had gone from the company of Lydia she sought her chamber. And there she communed with her past life, spreading it before her inner vision as rich broidered garments of gold and purple might be spread before her fleshly eyes. And she perceived that all the Lord had bestowed upon her in those early days was good and seemly ; even the great sorrow that had fallen upon her was as a token from God and like unto a lantern lighting a dark road. For she would not have sought the Lord with such diligence if she had not suffered and known the evil of loss.

And, as she considered the past, she perceived that it contained within it all her future, that it created what was to follow. Then she turned her mind to dreams of coming days. And she perceived also that these were good. For it was now her purpose to seek baptism, to be sealed with the Spirit of love and faith, to strive in works, and in prayer to be faithful unto our Lord Jesus Christ.

And she was comforted, because she called to mind the words of Paul, who had assured her that, if she were worthy, she would look upon her husband once more in the kingdom of the blessed. Great was her joy, because the saints had shown her that the worlds of the dead and of the living were not far from one another. Through the remission of sins she would be freed from the bondage of everlasting death ; and, when her full time was accomplished, pass into the world of the ever-living, which was called by her people the home of the dead.

Lifting up her eyes to the light, she arose, and, calling her servant, bade him seek out the habitation of the saints, entreating them to come unto her. The desire for speedy baptism consumed her being. She could not tarry when a deep purpose of this kind filled her mind ; by nature she ever craved to accomplish her thought with a deed.

She went forth from her dwelling, walking in the cool of dawn in her garden. And she was going to and fro among the herbs when a slave came unto her saying that one desired to speak with her. Deeming the saints had hasted to come unto her dwelling, she bade the slave admit this person to her presence.

And lo ! Themesius bowed himself before her, excusing his visit at that early hour because he bore tidings of import unto her.

She bade him speak in haste, for there was much before her in the coming hours of the day.

And he said unto her : " I have ever held very dear thy life and thy happiness. Thou art a widow, with no brother or husband to safeguard thee from ill. Thou knowest little of the evil that lieth in wait for good women who are earnest in well-doing. So I have come to warn thee against the stranger."

And here Lydia spoke swiftly, cutting short his speech with her question : " Speakest thou of the strangers who come from Troas ? Speakest thou of the messengers of God ? "

Themesius made answer : " I speak of those Jews who have come to trouble the peace of our town and to set the people and the slaves against the Rulers. These men have been cast out from the dwelling of Elkana because of their evil speech, because they set up this Jesus as being greater than the Emperor. Now Elkana is much respected by all, and his judgment is sure. Wherefore I would that thou follow in his ways. Go no more to hearken unto these babblers of folly ; close thy doors to them."

Then was Lydia greatly angered, and yet she strove to hide her wrath, for she read the heart of this man and knew him to be cunning and crafty in his devices.

" Thy speech is smooth as the oil of olives," she declared, " thou devisest evil imaginations. I heard thy words when thou spakest unto the saints by the riverside. Thou wast jealous of them because the people hearkened to their words. And so thou hast borne unto Elkana evil tales concerning these holy men. He hath hearkened unto thy words, for he is a fearful man. Wherefore thou hast prevailed with him.

" Now I have bidden the saints to my house, so that they will baptise me. And as thou hast taken their shelter from them, I will seek to constrain them to abide within my dwelling."

And Themesius made answer : " Grave scandal will arise if they lodge with thee. Hast thou given any thought to what will follow on the heels of this welcome of beggars and outcasts ? The people who buy of thy goods will not come unto thee, for the Romans will turn against those who seek to confound authority. And thou shalt be in an evil case ; thy treasure will melt away and thou wilt be deserted by all."

And Themesius besought Lydia to heed his words, to do as Elkana—to drive these strangers forth from her gates.

As he spoke a slave came unto his mistress, saying : " Behold, these men of God await thy pleasure."

Then did Lydia command her slave to lead forth Themesius

from her house. And, even as Themesius gazed darkly upon her, she bade the slave give word to all to shut her doors to this man from henceforth.

He sought with entreaty and much speaking to win her from this purpose. But she would not heed him, passing from out the garden, seeking the saints who awaited her coming in the hall of her abode.

She led them to a chamber, and when they had set themselves about her at her bidding, she spoke unto them, saying: "Masters, I am all unworthy that ye should come into my dwelling; but, if my works for the poor have found favour in your sight, I beseech you to baptise me and to make me a follower of your Master Jesus Christ."

Then, when Timothy had baptised her, and when the saints had baptised all those who dwelt in her house, she spoke once more concerning her works for the poor.

And she asked the saints to abide in her habitation. It was large, and there were many workers who laboured within it, so she deemed that the Brethren might thereby find souls to be saved, and might cause it to be a place wherein others might gather who desired to shape a council of Elders and a Church in Philippi.

The Brethren were well content to abide there, and they were freed for the work of the Lord. She would not permit them to labour in her service, and thus render her measure for measure. She desired that they should give all their days to the teaching of the people.

There were many women known to her. These she summoned into the presence of the saints, and so a great number were in time gathered within Christ's fold in that town. And Luke was rejoiced in heart, for he perceived that he had not erred in seeking out Paul, and in telling him that the Macedonians would hearken unto his teaching and welcome him to their midst.

CHAPTER V

THEMESIUS HAS RECOURSE TO MAGIC

HOWBEIT, the evil man, when he is crossed, waxeth doubly strong with the heat of his baffled yearnings. And Themesius rested not, but went from one to another in that town, spreading over it a net of evil words.

He bethought him of those who work in magic, of a maid who was known as a diviner, and was much sought after because of the

spirit which possessed her at times, which could speak with her lips, declaring the future of man and his past to him.

So Themesius questioned a servant concerning these workers in magic. And the servant spoke of them on this wise :

“ In the old days the magicians could hew the moon out of the skies and cause it to descend and rest upon the rim of the earth. They stayed the winds in their courses, even the hot desert wind of the south. They changed stones into beasts, and they caused beasts to appear in the shape of men. The birds and the dogs have uttered in the speech of man. Many and marvellous have been the works of the magicians.

“ Howbeit, those who possess this maid have not the power of the ancient sorcerers, yet, if ye give them gold, they will show you strange things, and they may contrive for you the undoing of your enemies.”

So Themesius sought out the workers of magic. And he found them in a dim chamber of stone, where they burnt incense, where there were strange perfumes from herbs. And they sought to show him the marvels they could work. One laid his hands upon the brow of Themesius and cast about him a foul, sweet air, drawing it forth from an instrument. Then he bade Themesius look upon a peacock. And when he had gazed upon this bird and perceived its feathers of many colours, the magician caused him to breathe the more heavily that evil sweetness. And, behold, the peacock was changed into a serpent, and again it was changed into a dog that spoke unto him, saying : “ Thou shalt drive thine enemies from this town, yet thou shalt not prevail against them. Thou shalt triumph over them, yet they will overcome thee. So it is written, and so shall it be.”

And all this while the maid lay still upon the ground, stirring not, seeming to sleep.

Howbeit, Themesius had knowledge of the ways of these workers of magic ; and when the dog faded into the dimness and the peacock once more stood before him, he declared : “ I have heard the dog utter the words of the people, nay, rather, ye have bewitched me, causing me thus to hear him. Yet were the words that came unto my hearing spoken by this maid who hath not stirred, and lieth as one who sleepeth.”

Then the three withered men, the owners of the maid, were angered by his words, and they denied his charge, and offered to show him further marvels. But he bade them cease prating, and declared his will unto them. “ Your practices cannot in any manner serve me. I would win the favour of the people in the

market-place. Ye are not in good repute with the merchants in this town."

And here did Themesius pause in his speech, for the fierce old men did gloom upon him, thrusting out their fingers, that were like birds' claws, protesting that they were much sought after by rich and poor, by even the wives of the Magistrates.

And they named one who was held to be the noblest in position among the women in Philippi. "Eneda," they declared, "came unto us and bade us search for certain earrings of gold, for certain jewels of great costliness which had been stolen from her. And, behold, the spirit possessed the maid, and she gave Eneda true tidings concerning them, telling her that the robber was one whom she held in high esteem. And this was so; and through us, therefore, were the jewels found and rendered unto their owner.

"Lovers who are cast down and sick at heart, come unto us, and we render unto them their desire. Merchants, when darkness hath fallen, come in singly to this chamber. They ask of the spirit of the serpent that possesseth the girl counsel concerning their ships upon the sea. And she telleth them whether they will make a fair journey, whether the winds will be contrary, whether the sea robbers will ravish their vessels and take their crews captive.

"All believe in the words that are uttered, and therefore we are held secretly in high repute. Outwardly those in authority may not do us honour, yet do they show us their favour secretly, paying us in treasure for our great services to them."

And Themesius made answer, "It is the maid that serves them."

Whereupon the elder of the withered men protested: "She is ours; we gave a fair price for her; and if it were not for our protection she could not serve all who seek what is hidden, who desire that revelation should be made to them concerning their destiny. All believe in the words uttered by the serpent, who is known as the Snake of Knowledge by some, and possesseth the girl, causing her lips to utter at our bidding what shall come to pass."

Then Themesius said unto them: "I will pay you gold if ye will set certain words of shame in the mouth of this maid, and cause her to follow my enemies and to cry them down, so that the multitude shall believe that these people are evil."

And the magicians answered him: "We can command this maid to follow your enemies, and she will obey us, but we cannot command the spirit that entereth within her, and is the master when the words of wisdom are uttered by her."

Now Themesius believed that these men feared authority, and would not, because of this dread, set speech that might be unseemly

in the mouth of their slave. So he sought not to press them concerning it, but took his leave, saying he would return again.

This wily Macedonian knew that, if the maid spoke evilly concerning the saints when they went to preach among the people, then the multitude would look with disfavour upon the strangers. For many among them were superstitious, and their minds would, therefore, be closed against the saints, their defences sealed against their words.

Wherefore Themesius visited the workers of magic once more, and they permitted him to speak with the maid alone. She was a tender plant, slender and fair; strange were her glances, absent her manner, so that she did not seem to hearken, so that it would seem hard to win her wandering mind.

Howbeit, when Themesius spoke unto her, bidding her speak after the fashion he had devised, she made answer: "Sir, thou wouldst have me command my master. The slave may not order his ways."

"Of what master speakest thou?" Themesius asked.

"Of the spirit of the serpent," said the maid. "When he possesseth my body he casteth the coverlet of sleep about my soul. Give thy commands to him and not unto me."

Then was the Macedonian perplexed in mind, and he believed the maid played with him. He chid her, and threatened her with stripes and punishment if she would not do his will. And, being fearful, she besought him to pardon her and promised to obey his commands.

So she was led into the market-place, where she perceived the saints. And a tale of words was given her that she should utter at a certain hour.

When the time for teaching led the strangers to the riverside she was to cry out, and with much crying to defame them, causing a scandal and much talk in the town.

CHAPTER VI

SYNTICHE CAUSES ELKANA TO BE ASHAMED: PAUL REPROVES HER PRIDE

Now it came to pass that a certain woman of noble birth, named Syntiche, heard that the saints dwelt in the house of Lydia, and she learned also that Elkana had cast them forth from his dwelling. So she went unto him and asked him how it was he had committed this ill deed.

He declared that the saints sought to undo the authority of the Emperor, that he had been told that their prophet Jesus was not dead but living, and that they would set Him up in the place of the Emperor if they could first win for Him many followers with their false tales.

And Syntiche answered that the Jew had hearkened unto tale-bearers ; that there was no truth in such idle talk as had been borne to him ; and that it was a dishonour to his house to cast the stranger from his board ; and all those Jews who abode in that town would turn their faces from him.

Being firm of purpose, Syntiche determined that she would destroy this scandal with another ; for she had not yet learned to render good for evil. She believed with all her heart in the glad tidings borne by the saints unto Philippi.

And, being mighty in fervour, and desirous that the people should believe, she sought out other women, and spoke ill of Elkana to them. She declared that he would cause the tribe of the Jews in Philippi to be a byword among their Brethren in other cities, for he had broken the law concerning the welcome that is given to the seemly stranger who cometh from far places and seeketh to sojourn with the people of his race.

So those of the Jews who abode in Philippi made much talk concerning the saints ; and through this much speaking were led to hearken unto them. Then did they believe in their words, so that they cast black looks at Elkana and he was shamed.

He sought out the saints privily and entreated them to lodge once more with him. Syntiche, who would not be outdone in well-doing by her sister in Christ, bade Paul and Silas to her dwelling, and entreated them to be of her household. When they declared that they might not depart from the one who had offered them shelter in their need, Syntiche was provoked against Lydia. And she spoke hard words unto her, saying : " Thou settest a bridle upon these holy men ; thou wouldst prison them in thine house. Set not thyself up in this unseemly manner, for it ill becometh a trader in purple. Let these good men go ; I would fain welcome them to my dwelling. There will come unto it the Magistrates and all those who would not enter into the house of a merchant of coloured cloths."

Being wise in many things, though quick to anger when her authority was disputed, Lydia sought out Paul and asked the saint to give judgment in this matter. And he rebuked Syntiche for the sin of pride, saying that there should be neither high nor low, that within the Church those who excelled in righteousness were first,

and that only through humbleness of spirit might she conquer this sin of pride in her name and in her power in that city.

Syntiche abased herself in the presence of them all and besought Lydia to pardon her. Yet was she for a space set against those things which Lydia devised, and she was seldom in those days of accord with her.

I give unto you this tale of small contentions because they will show you how the desire for well-doing is oft perverted ; and even among the holy women there was at times no small dissension because of their zeal for the works of the Lord.

CHAPTER VII

THE EMPLOYMENT OF MAGIC WORKS AGAINST THEMESIUS : PAUL EXORCISES THE SPIRIT POSSESSING THE MAGICIAN'S MAID : THIS LEADS TO RIOT

Now on the Sabbath, when the Brethren made their way to the riverside through the press of the people, the maid was led by her masters, who had received moneys from Themesius, to the place of the gathering. And as the people drew away from the saints at their bidding, the maid was thrust forth from among them, so that she stood so close to Paul she touched the hem of his robe.

Then did she cry out with such loudness all the people were hushed. They whispered one to another, "The Serpent of Knowledge speaketh ; let us hearken to him."

And all who were about the saints were moved by the words of her crying : "These are the slaves of the mighty God, and they are come unto Philippi so that they may show the people the way of salvation, so that all may be saved through them."

And when the people sighed with wonder she spoke yet again, and her speech was of the same import, though the words were changed, and her whole body was cast about as a shaken leaf by her crying.

Themesius was greatly angered, for he perceived the people believed in all that she uttered ; and he whispered unto her masters his command : "Lay hands on the maid and bear her from among the people. She hath not obeyed me ; she hath used words that were forbidden by me. Punish her, and I will come unto you again and declare my will to her."

Now the will of an evil man is like unto a sharp sword that, when in the hands of its possessor, smiteth blindly all who lie in his path.

This Macedonian now hated Lydia, and, because he hated her, he desired her the more. He yearned to cast her down, to abase her pride, and he knew that through the overthrow of the saints only could he thus encompass her undoing.

There were many of the Roman stock in that city, and they were wealthy, possessing authority, possessing a good name with the people. Howbeit, they liked not the Jews, for they had little understanding of them. They accused those who were of Judæa of craft, of a peculiar pride ; and oft were there disputations between the people of the two races.

Clement, the son of the Chief Magistrate, owed money to a certain Jew ; and, being one of a wasteful nature, he could not return what was borrowed in due season. His father had spoken sternly unto him concerning this debt, and he had shamed the young man before his household when the lender sought his dues.

So Clement held that all Hebrews were his enemies, and he gladly inclined his ear unto Themesius, who spoke to him concerning seditious strangers who had come from Judæa with a tale concerning one of their own race whom they desired to raise up above the Emperor, thus overthrowing all authority.

Now Clement bore the words of the Macedonian to his father, and required of him that he should consider the menace that thus rose up like a wolf's head in Philippi.

The Magistrate was old, stout of figure, not easily stirred by the words of youth. And he declared that he would wait until testimony had been borne him concerning the strangers. There were many who came and went in that town ; only the fool hearkened to wild talk concerning them.

So Clement was discomfited, yet he was not thus led to forget the strangers. He went among the Romans, speaking to them of the evil men who were within the gates of their city, who sought to sway the hearts of the multitude with the turbulent wind of treason.

Wherefore there arose, like a gathering tide a silent anger against Paul and Silas. And they knew not that there were these evil wishers among the householders of Philippi. They continued to pray and preach, spreading the tidings of the Lord among the people.

Soon all the Jews were led to hearken, and they were not like to those of their race in other cities. They treated the Brethren

civilly, and many of them were baptised, becoming fervent believers in our Lord Christ.

Themesius went once more to the chamber where abode the workers of magic. He asked them whether they had punished the girl for her foolish crying.

They made answer : " We have praised her, or, rather, we have rejoiced because of the words the spirit uttered. Since that hour many have come unto the girl demanding counsel, for they were amazed at the words she uttered, and the ignorant declare that the gods speak through her. So we prosper because she hath thus cried after the strangers, and we will neither punish her nor strive with her concerning the words that are uttered by her lips."

Then Themesius sought to win them with bribes ; but they would not be gainsaid by him, for the gold that many bore unto them because of the maid was greater than the price the Macedonian could name to them.

And these three withered men lay in wait for the saints daily, watching their goings out and comings in ; and when they went unto the river to preach to those who were devout, these workers in magic summoned the girl, bidding her follow Paul and Silas through the town and not cease from her crying.

It was not needful thus to command the maid. Strangely stirred was her whole being when she drew nigh to Paul ; and she declared that there was a white radiance about him ; that joy was hers when she bathed within it ; and there was truly the glory of the great God around him.

Therefore she lifted up her voice, calling to the people to bow down before this mighty one, declaring his holiness. And, though the saints entreated her to be silent, she would not be stilled, increasing her clamour, her body cast about as a vessel upon a wind-blown sea.

Now harm was wrought through the cries of the spirit that ruled the maid. In the early days, when first the saints taught in Philippi, only seekers after God, those who desired true wisdom, hearkened to the teaching of the Brethren.

The Serpent of Knowledge became the talk of the whole people. And the voice, which was sharp and clear as the call of birds, summoned those who were curious or wanton of mind to the assembly by the riverside. These sought, in jest and rude play with one another, to cause such disorder devout persons might not hearken unto the words of the teacher.

So Lydia asked the three old men to keep the slave within their dwelling at the hour of prayer. Howbeit, they would not yield to

her demand, for their treasure increased daily through the witness the maid bore unto the saints.

And one evening, when many had gathered about Paul through the loud crying, anger possessed him ; he could no more stay the words that he had many times held back from utterance.

He turned him about, gazing with intentness upon the girl ; and she bowed herself down before him, her cryings stilled as he spoke unto her, bidding the spirit to come forth and no more to seek lodgment within her body.

For a space no man stirred. The talk of the people was as the drone of bees. It entered not into the hearing of Paul nor into the hearing of the girl.

She did shiver and shake, and the creature that possessed her wrestled with the will of the saint, striving against his holy words, but in vain. They cast him out and he returned no more, the maid from henceforth being freed from this unseen master.

Howsoever, those who had paid the price for her were provoked to wrath, for they could not restore unto its lodgment the Serpent of Knowledge. They declared that Paul and Silas were in league with demons. And, when the people were once more gathered together to hearken unto the preacher, they cast themselves about, leaping into the air, crying out, at the bidding of Themesius, " These strangers have plotted to burn our city ; they would overthrow the rule of the Magistrates ; they would rob the people of Philippi of the fruits of their labour. They seek the undoing of all."

And Clement rose up, declaring : " These men utter words that are true ; these strangers desire our humiliation ; they would forbid the customs of the people ; they are in league against the State. Come, let us seize them and slay them, so that evil may not prevail."

Then there was a great tumult ; for Lydia caused certain of the Jews to gather about the saints. These strove with the multitude who had been provoked to wrath by the wild words of Clement and the withered men. Yet, being few, they might not stay the Romans and Greeks who came against them.

All fell away ; the two saints stood alone in the midst of their enemies, who, though they were as beasts in their vain ignorance, were abashed when they faced the Brethren. For the earnest countenance of Paul, and the gentle dignity of Silas, and that strange power that is of the Spirit, baffled them, holding them back for a short space.

Howsoever, Themesius would not be gainsaid, and he caused men to sling stones. Some of the women who watched were cast to the ground, others were wounded. And the three workers in

magic made great noise, beating upon shrill-crying instruments of music, and uttering spells that caused hardihood to enter into the youths, who laid violent hands on Paul and Silas, dragging them into the courts with loud clamour.

Then the withered men rejoiced, with speech and evil sounds of music rousing the multitude to even greater wrath.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CIVIC PRIDE OF THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE OF PHILIPPI WOUNDED BY THE RIOT : PAUL AND SILAS PUNISHED : LYDIA'S INTERVENTION PRESERVES THE CHURCH

I WOULD write of the Magistrates who rule Philippi. They were not Greeks, but of the seed of the Romans, and their earnest desire was to cause their town to be a pattern of order, so to shape its governance that peace should reign within its borders. And they designed that the fear of riot should so fill the hearts of the citizens it should be like a circle of ringed spears protecting the commonwealth from the shedding of blood, from that woeful civil disorder that oft causeth the destruction of great cities.

Now the father of Clement was puffed up with pride because under his rule Philippi prospered, because the traders came and went peacefully, because the customs of the Romans were observed. Dearer than treasure, dearer than the joys of feasting, dearer than costly apparel, dearer than aught else, was the order and peace that reigned within the town to the heart of this Magistrate, who was like unto the first citizens of Rome in the love he had for the law and its observance.

Now there came unto Philippi four envoys from other regions. And they said to the Chief Magistrate : " We have heard of the fame of thy city, and we are come to study the manner of its rule, to sit at thy feet and be instructed by thee ; so that we may apply the knowledge we shall thus gain to the ruling of our own towns."

Then was the Chief Magistrate greatly exalted in mind. He led his guests through the noble courts ; he showed them the hall of the strangers, which was hung with rich brodered work in blue and purple and divers colours ; he led them, while it was yet dark, to the summit of a high tower. And they watched the dawn, clear as crystal, spreading over the city, lighting up the white walls of

Philippi, causing them to shine as if they were precious metals, in the hush giving to all a wondrous beauty that stirred the hearts of the strangers.

And the Chief Magistrate said unto their leader, Galbus: "Sir, I would bid thee to a feast in the cool of the day, and the citizens shall gather together to greet thee. They will bear thee tidings concerning my humble labours for their welfare. I have not spared my health or strength. My nights have been sleepless, all my days surrendered to my work for the perfecting of this town.

"And now, in my age, I delight in it; for we have no disorder among our citizens. They are faithful subjects to the Emperor, and would gladly die for him.

"I have not easily builded up such civic virtue. In past years I caused the youths to be instructed in the virtue of obedience to the laws and loyalty to the Emperor. And now, if one spoke words of treason in the streets, he would be torn to pieces by the multitude; naught could stay their anger.

"Howbeit, it would be incredible if one were thus to preach sedition; the very earth would be revolted and would rise up against him.

"Ye will perceive the greatness of the spirit of this people, and ye will know that a few—two or three—who have understanding can labour thus perfectly, shape their city, causing it to be a precious stone in the treasure of Rome."

Now the envoys believed the words of the Chief Magistrate, though he seemed to take his ease, and to have that air of well-being that is not usual with those who labour sorely early and late for other men.

And the strangers went to their chambers to prepare themselves for the feast that was to be held in their honour.

And lo! as they assembled in the great hall, the noise of tumult smote upon their ears, and, hasting forth, they perceived a multitude of men slinging stones and striking one another. They perceived women and youths cast upon the ground, and people who ran by them with fear graven on their countenances.

They demanded of one of these the cause of the tumult.

And he made answer: "The multitude have rebelled against authority; the Jews would cast down the rule of the Emperor; they strive to seize the town. Hasten to some shelter where ye may not be attacked and slain."

Then did the strangers seek the Magistrates in the market-place. These were gathered together and were apparelled in their costly robes, so that at the banquet they might do honour to their guests.

They went to and fro, casting up their hands to Heaven, and their conversation was as the cackling of geese, no sense or reason in their words. For all were dismayed at the sounds of tumult, at the rumour that the hidden enemy was within their gates and sought to put the people of Philippi to the edge of the sword.

“Not since remembrance was vouchsafed to man,” declared one, “hath there been such disorder. It is the end of all civil rule; we shall be cast out; there will be an uprising of the slaves and we shall be slain.”

After a short space a messenger came unto the courts, saying: “The multitude bear unto you for judgment the leaders of this revolt against authority. The guard has quelled their followers, and, after much stern fighting, overcome them, scattering them like chaff.”

Then was the disorder in the courts stilled. The Magistrates were no more dismayed, rejoicing in what they believed was a great victory over the hidden enemy who had striven to overturn authority.

So fearful were they, they believed in these false tales. They knew not that those who were called the enemy were but two men of God, who had striven to still the tumult, who had raised no hand against the violent men who sought their undoing.

And behold! the press of the Greeks and Romans opened out; and Paul and Silas, bound and bleeding, were flung at the feet of the Rulers, where they lay, faint from the blows that had been dealt them, their mouths filled with dust, their raiment torn, causing them to seem like the wild robbers of the hills.

Galbus, one of the envoys, said unto a Magistrate: “Strange is the disorder of this city. Thou hast declared that naught but peace reigneth within it, and that its citizens are an example to all the nations.”

Now Galbus was a mocker, and to the Chief Magistrate these were bitter words. Yet he could not gainsay them. Wherefore he became possessed with fury, and he declared: “Great is our shame. Seek not to humble us the more with thy speech.”

Then did he and those about him cast off their costly robes, dividing them in many pieces, so that no man could wear them at any future time. And this was a sign unto the people that the offence of Paul and Silas was grave, and in a certain manner it comforted the Chief Magistrate, who was woeful of countenance and utterly cast about by the overthrow of all that was dear to him.

The withered men thrust themselves forward at the bidding of Clement, and, like bulls, they bellowed out their accusation.

“ These thieves of the commonweal, these ravishers of our homes, seek to set up as Emperor a Jew named Jesus. They would lead the common folk against their Rulers. They declare that men should not be bound by the Roman law, but should give themselves over to rebellion, to lustful devices. They teach the people treason, scattering among them evil talk concerning the Kingdom of their leader Jesus, which shall cast out the kingdom of our father and our god, the Emperor.

“ We demand the lives of these two men, who are but lost and wandering slaves, who came from across the sea, fleeing from their masters.”

And the workers of magic gave utterance to many other words. Yet even men will weary of talk, and at last will there come an end to their windy speech.

When they ceased, Paul rose up demanding silence, so that he might make an answer to these charges. And, as the Rulers still were earnestly employed in the tearing asunder of their raiment, it might well have been that Paul could have gained a hearing for his defence.

Howbeit, Themesius had the wicked spider's eye, which perceiveth all that might happen—what lieth behind and what lieth before. He caused great clamour to arise among the people, who demanded that these traitors should forthwith be cast into prison, for they had mayhap confederates abroad, and that an example should be made so that no slaves or Hebrews should rise in revolt against the established order.

And the father of Clement bade the guard yield up the two prisoners to the lictors, that they should be punished with many stripes and then cast into prison, into safe hold.

All the people shouted their joy, for they were eager, desiring to make sport of the torment of the saints, punishment of others being ever the delight of lustful men.

The guard drove forth Silas and Paul, and they could not make known to the Magistrates that they were falsely judged, being Roman citizens and not straying slaves. Thus did the lawmakers break the law.

And the clamour of the multitude quenched the voices of the prisoners, who were smitten with many strokes, so that their senses faded from them, and they fainted away in the presence of the people.

Some of the Hebrews, who had come to believe in Christ, whispered one to another, saying : “ Behold, if Jesus be in truth the Son of God, He will break the newcords about Paul and Silas as the thread

of tow when the flame scorseth it. Or mayhap Jesus will cause a cloud to descend from Heaven and gather the saints away within its folds."

Howbeit, though the skies were dark they cast no dim dews about them, concealing them. No sign was vouchsafed, no men among the persecutors were smitten. In triumph they bore the bruised Brethren to the place of their keeping.

And Lydia heard the murmuring among the congregation of those who had been but lately baptised, and she bade them enter within her garden of herbs.

She would permit no man among them to lift up his voice lest he should deride the saints. And she spoke many earnest words of exhortation unto them, though Paul had declared unto her that silence was the seemly woman's part, that they should not be heard in the assembly.

Yet this godly woman knew that it was an hour of peril for the Church in Philippi, and neither Luke nor Timothy were nigh; for they had gone in the company of Syntiche to a certain Roman who had the ear of the Magistrates, and might be persuaded to instruct them concerning the error of their judgment of Paul and Silas in the agora.

And Lydia admonished the assembled people, saying: "I have heard your whispering and muttering. I have heard you declare that our Master Christ was verily not God because He sent no sign, no cloud of dark dew from Heaven, that would bear away the saints, as hath been done of old time to the prophets when they were in need. Behold, ye men of Philippi, ye are faithless; ye are dead unto Christ, our Master. For ye do not perceive that, even as He suffered many things at the hands of the unbelievers, so must his Disciples suffer. And their stripes and torment are but a sign sent unto you so that ye may believe in the glory of Jesus, who rose from the dead on the third day, who watcheth over all the faithful, trying their hearts and their bodies in order that they may be purified of all grossness, living, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Now there were many among the men assembled who were afraid, and desired to desert the fold of Christ. They feared the scorn of the multitude, the condemnation of those who wished them ill. And they bethought them they would secretly fall away, going no more among the Brethren. For they deemed they had been deserted, because no miracle had been wrought in the market-place.

Lydia divined their cowardly purpose, and was determined to wrestle against this fearfulness. So, having spoken unto them for

a short space, she bade each man in turn rise up and declare whether his faith was in Christ, or whether he would go forth from the Church, casting in his lot with the unbelievers, the followers after Satan.

And first there arose an Elder, and the words of denial were prepared within him. But when they should gush forth he became as one who is stricken with dumbness, his eyes cast down before the stern gaze of Lydia.

And she said unto him : " Brother, I perceive that thou art a faithful believer in our Lord Jesus Christ, and in this Church of His in Philippi, and in the revelation that hath been given unto these holy men who now lie in the prison ? "

The Elder bowed his head in assent. And then Lydia summoned Elkana and spoke in the same manner unto him. He also was fearful of heart, desiring to renounce his belief in Christ, to separate himself from the saints. Yet was his tongue in bonds likewise, and he had not the hardihood to utter his denial in the presence of this good woman. So he bowed his head, seeming to assent to her words.

And all those others who were assembled, yielded unto the firm demeanour of Lydia, and were constrained by her resolution to abide within the fold of Christ.

Thus ye may perceive that it is the shepherd who must be proved above all others. And one woman or one man is as the voice of a great multitude if that one soul be firm of purpose and filled with the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER IX

THE EARTHQUAKE MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE : THE JAILER'S CONVERSION

Now a strange stillness fell upon Philippi. No wind stirred the leaves ; no talk was there in the streets ; all had gone home at the hour of sunset. Men were wearied with their shouting and their tumult, troubled by a secret fear. Strange had been the happenings of the day, and stranger seemed the swift-gathering darkness and the hush that fell upon Philippi.

The prison was a small way removed from the houses of the town ; there was a guard without it and a keeper within. These also were

silent, for they felt the unseen menace, the threat that seemed contained in the blackness that now was all about them.

When the faintness had passed, the two prisoners had no fear ; the peace of the Lord reigned within their being. They rejoiced in their tribulation ; and so glad were they because they had been found worthy thus to suffer that they lifted up their voices, breaking the hush with songs of praise, with psalms and much thanksgiving.

And those wicked men, who were imprisoned for stealing, for murder, and for deeds of violence, hearkened unto the holy words of triumph that were uttered by the saints. And they beat upon the walls, asking Paul and Silas to speak unto them, to declare their purpose in that prison, and wherefore they sang joyfully in these evil dungeons.

Then did Paul and Silas bear testimony unto Christ, instructing these wild and ignorant men, telling them of the forgiveness that would be bestowed on all if they would believe and seek to lead a new life.

And they would have continued speaking, for these men were eager and amazed at their tidings, if the guard had not come into the dungeon and rebuked the saints, bidding them hold their peace. For there was some great evil abroad ; the people of the town were fearful, and there should be silence, so that this winged devil might peradventure pass by the town of Philippi, wreaking no ill upon it.

Then did stillness fall upon all.

And, having perceived that the prisoners were fast bound, the jailer retired to his chamber, which was without the cells, between them and the prison gates.

There this man cast himself down, and rested in a muse, with the words the saints had uttered to the wicked men spread before his soul. He was a Roman, upright in nature, the possessor of certain stern virtues.

He loved order and design ; he followed a seemly manner of life ; his days were set about with duties that were surely fulfilled by him. And, as his life on earth was thus clearly shaped, so would he have the life in the world to come shaped with the same plainness. Yet was all hidden from him ; the mystery of death and the passing of the spirit were dark and unsearchable. And he was fretted because he could not divine what followed the withering up of his body, its passing away.

Now the words of Paul had stirred the jailer's mind, a mind wherein there had lurked other sayings borne unto him by one of his kin concerning the strangers whom the kinsman had called the prophets of the most High God.

And when he had asked whether the teaching of this mighty God would be, because of its obscurity, concealed by those in authority, the man had answered him : " Ye might as easily hide the wind."

And this saying was true, for, behold, the words of Christ were uttered in the darkness on that eve, and had come like healing balm to this jailer, soothing the fret of his soul. Within them was the sure promise of a life to come that was not as a noisome pit of disorder, but was seemly and well ordered. All those who were righteous would be the subjects in that Kingdom.

This was the meaning the jailer had read into the words of the saints. And he was glad at heart, for he held himself to be pure in all his ways, and his days had been filled with righteous deeds. He held that these two strangers were just and God-fearing because of the nobility of their words, many of which had been garnered for him, as I have told you, by his kinsman.

He was in a manner perplexed. He deemed it strange that those who spoke with such power and truth should be led to lodge within this prison. And his perplexity twisted and turned, finding no straight path to follow.

And he uttered his desire : " I would that I might perceive some token, some sign whereby I might know that these people have received knowledge from the rulers and law-givers of the skies."

As there came no answer to this utterance, the jailer turned himself about, soon passing into a deep sleep, for the air was heavy, bearing within it the thick drowsiness that comes from the juice of herbs.

Now Paul and Silas slumbered not ; their wounds did bleed, and where the chains bound the bruised flesh there was much pain, so that they were tormented. And, after the weariness of that evil day, it seemed as if they could not for one hour more bear the bondage of their bodies. Their souls yearned for the infinite freedom. And still, like burning coals, their bound limbs seared their spirit, and they prayed in silence that they might be spared, that death might visit them before the day did spring upon the night, scattering it.

And lo ! there came a dull tumult on the air, as if a multitude were dealing the earth heavy blows.

And then there was a ceasing for an instant of that dull noise.

Behold ! the ground did rise up, the stones of the walls did yawn, the saints were twisted, cast about, and flung from the stocks of wood to which they had been bound.

And there beat upon their ears mighty sounds, and there were strange, lost cries coming from out the blackness of that vast night.

The earth did once more leap, and the door of the cell was cast outwards, the posts to which it was bound being drawn away as if some unseen hands had removed them, and caused the road to freedom to open before the saints.

Then there was great moaning and crying out from the prisoners who were in the dungeons, and Paul lifted up his voice, saying, "Peace, all is well."

No man would hearken. The chains had been loosed ; they were free, the doors open ; the guard fled. Yet such terror had entered into the hearts of these prisoners that they lay upon the ground as if they had been stricken with palsy ; even their crying ceased. For the greatest of all fears had smitten them with dumbness. They scarcely breathed in the silence that followed the quaking of the earth.

Now Silas whispered unto Paul : " The way is open. Let us pass through the hole in this wall and gain our freedom."

But Paul rebuked him, saying : " We are in ward. Let us not flee ; for then would it appear that we had done evil and fled from our shame."

As they bided beside the riven stocks, the loosed chains, they perceived that there was a paleness without. The darkness was passing ; and they saw in the room beyond a man who stood weeping in the loneliness.

He did mutter and moan, raising up a sword to his breast, lamenting : " The prisoners have fled ; I have failed in my duty ; death shall be my portion."

And Paul had pity on him. He called out, saying : " We are all within. None of those in thy charge are gone from thy keeping. Summon the guard, and I shall abide their coming. Put up thy weapon ; we give thee our word as Roman citizens we shall rest here till thou returnest again with thy followers."

And the jailer sought for these men who had fled into the open country, fearing lest they should be swallowed up in a pit that did gape in the earth at the prison door.

There was no more shaking ; there fell the old quiet upon the land. The affrighted guard returned unto their charge. And they kindled torches so that they might discover all the nakedness of the riven prison.

And the jailer bade his followers see to the common men, who had been too stricken with fear to seek their freedom.

When the guards went unto their charge, this just man bore his torch of flickering flame into the presence of the saints.

And there were great beads of sweat upon his brow as he cast

himself before them, saying: "The demons are all abroad this night, their monsters unchained. They may yet cause the dragon-hearted earth to open and devour us. O servants of the High God, show me how I and all my household may be saved. We have lived virtuously; we have sought not in any manner to offend what is holy; we desire but to serve the Master of the skies.

"Entreat Him to descend in His might and wrestle with the foulness that hath spread abroad over Philippi. Show me how I may serve your God; instruct me in the manner in which we may be saved."

Paul declared that through the baptism of water and through faith in Christ would he and his children be saved. And he bade this trembling Roman utter with him the prayer of our Father.

When the words "Deliver us from evil" were spoken, the jailer ceased shuddering, the peace that is of the Spirit stilled his limbs.

He had quaked and been shaken by the horror of that death of duty which he had sought in his anguish, when he had believed that he had failed in his trust to those in authority. Paul had rescued him from that sorrowful end; and he heaped upon him many broken words of thankfulness. All his service and his life he offered unto the Brethren.

They were sorely spent from suffering and from the night's torment, so he led them to his dwelling. And his wife and slave in that dim hour were roused from their swoon of terror, and were bidden to tend to the grievous bodily hurts of the prisoners.

Precious ointments and cooling herbs did cause them ease of being, and soon was Paul once more filled with burning zeal. He forgot all save the rescue of these pagan souls from the darkness of their unbelief and error.

He told them that the earthquake was not the work of demons. It had been sent as a sign, so that all men who had passed that night in Philippi should ever remember it, and should also bear within their memory that the uprising of the earth had followed the scourging of the servants of Jesus Christ.

"We are the least among men," declared the Apostle, "yet, because we bear witness to the holy words of the Son of God, He hath chosen to deliver us from the torment of our bonds, to open the prison doors for us. Thus shall many believe the words of our Master Jesus. And I know that even the Rulers of Philippi will be constrained by this testimony, and they will permit us to depart in peace."

Then the jailer was baptised by Silas; and his wife and slave

asked that they too might share this blessing of water and be cleansed from the impurity of their unbelief.

Yet this just man, who had such faith in Christ, doubted that the saints would be pardoned. He feared they would be slain, and besought them to put on his tunics, to change their countenance, so that it might be as the face of another. Then he would have them flee from the town southwards, taking little rest until they had passed over the borders of Macedonia.

A pitcher holdeth but a measure of water. His mind was emptied of thoughts of duty; only zeal for the safety of the saints possessed it.

Howsoever, Paul bade the jailer believe, for the Voice had placed the words in his mouth concerning the pardon of the Magistrates, and there was no cause for fear.

“They will come unto me, mayhap, and, after their fashion, demand my pardon.” Such was the bold speech of prophecy which cometh not from the fearful flesh of man, but from without his body, from his imperishable and invisible part.

CHAPTER X

SYNTICHE ENLISTS THE GOOD OFFICES OF JUNIUS

Now when darkness was swooping like some black being over Philippi, Syntiche, filled with wrath and with fears for the saints, sought out Junius,¹ one of Roman blood who was of her kin and possessed much wealth. So was he held in high honour by the Magistrates, such men regarding gold pieces as virtues, and ever worshipping the deluding strength of the golden calf, which strength is as naught when the Spirit seeketh its own.

And Syntiche bowed herself before this Roman, entreating him with many prayers to go unto the Chief Magistrate, and to tell him that two just men had been falsely accused and must forthwith be released from prison. For they preached peace and bade the people go softly, obeying their masters, and ever heeding their commands.

“They command obedience to the laws and to the Emperor. They might, with their teaching, raise up pillars of security that

¹ This name was first given as Felix; later it was written that Junius was his other name, and he was subsequently referred to as Junius.

would bear the burden of the commonweal in days of peril. They desire to render service to the town ; they seek not its undoing."

And Junius made answer : " I may not meddle with such matters. I know that these strangers are men of peace ; I have hearkened at times to their words. And, though I am no believer in gods, and believe but in the demons that torment all men, high and low, in their little span of life, yet, even if these strangers have not offended in their speech, even if this riot was caused by their enemies, I will not seek out the Magistrates and plead their cause. Wherefore should I thus cumber myself with the wrongs of straying slaves ? "

Here did Syntiche cry out angrily, declaring that the saints were not bondmen, they were of good repute and name.

Howbeit, Junius spoke, saying : " If they are not slaves they are the least among men. Such cattle do not concern us, O kinswoman of mine. I will not, even for thee, demean myself and entreat the Magistrates to pardon them."

Neither tears nor prayers would prevail with this man. He mocked at his cousin, telling her that she had been fooled and was the prey of the crafty and of the men without names, the common Hebrews, who were but dirt upon the earth.

Then Syntiche rose up proudly, saying : " These are Roman citizens, and ill will come to this town and its Rulers because they have caused Silas and Paul to be smitten with rods. It is a shame that shall not easily pass away from the fair name of Philippi."

Then was Junius much provoked, his countenance cast down ; and he reviled the Magistrates for their folly, and spoke unto his kinswoman, saying ; " I commend thee for thy wisdom in bearing unto me this tale of injustice.

" The matter is of great import, for the whole city may suffer ; the Chief Magistrate may be removed from his place of honour ; a fine may be demanded from the people. There is no telling the end of this evil. I will hasten unto the Rulers and will declare unto them the great wrong that hath been dealt out to Roman citizens."

Now all those who were of Philippi prided themselves on their kinship with Rome. They boasted that they were an example to the people of other cities, because Roman order and rule were faithfully followed in that city.

And Junius was dismayed at the dire offence that had been offered unto Paul and Silas. So, though night had cast its dark embrace about the town, this rich man set forth, passing through the still streets. And, having bidden Syntiche farewell, he went forward from her door, his mind intent upon his purpose.

CHAPTER XI

THE VISIT OF JUNIUS TO THE CHIEF MAGISTRATE

THE father of Clement had been, on that eve, a sore affliction to his slaves and to his kindred. For he was still filled with rage against the saints, who had caused him to tear his robes asunder. He declared that he was bowed down with shame because, in the eyes of the envoys, he was a reproach, and his praise of Philippi and its people had appeared to them as lying boasting.

They had said one to another—and their word had been borne to him—that he was a vain peacock who was without wit, who could but spread his tail of folly in the sun, giving himself the glory, imagining vain things.

They would not tarry for the feast that was to be held on the morrow, as that day of turmoil would not permit of its enjoyment.

And the Magistrate mourned because these strangers would go to their towns bearing with them the tidings of his vainglory and of his fall.

His wife would not bide in his company, so fierce were his words, so like an old bereft scold was he. And only in the punishment of his slaves could he find ease from his pain. Yet even that had not power for long to charm him. He was not wholly evil, and so he bade them seek rest and leave him to his perplexities.

The heavy air weighed upon his stout body and increased the fret of his soul. He knew not how to bear the burden of his affliction, and would have gone forth to pace the silent streets if Junius had not entered the chamber.

And when his eyes lighted upon his wealthy friend he perceived that there was much concern writ upon his countenance. It was long, and drawn as a bow that is pulled by the archer. It bore upon it, in the eyes of the woeful Magistrate, a fearfulness that caused this Ruler to cry out, "Bear ye evil tidings?"

"Yea, sir, very evil," was the answer of Junius.

"There can be no greater evil than that which hath been committed," declared the old man. "I am indeed hardened to affliction. There be few that have suffered as I have suffered in these past hours. There can be no greater shame and tribulation for me than what hath come to pass."

In this manner do ignorant men ever speak when the Lord lightly chastises them. Of a truth they know naught of tribulation, and

deem the little thorns of life to be like unto the great piercing spears of true trial and disaster.

When the Magistrate cast himself down with weary mutterings and groans, Junius said unto him, "I am come unto thee at this untoward time because I have learned that these men who were scourged by your orders are Roman citizens. This is an ill thing that hath been done. Haste to summon the Magistrates, so that they may on the instant hold counsel. For we shall suffer severely if these strangers seek to appeal, to make a noise concerning their unlawful punishment.

"The tumult that arose in the town is a light trouble, but as a feather on the wind when ye compare it with the injustice that hath been done through the orders of our Rulers. Summon, therefore, the council, and consult with them."

"I may not rouse them at this dead hour of night," declared the old man. "I do not credit your tale; it is but idle gossip that hath been borne unto thee."

Now the father of Clement was as obstinate as a yoke of asses. And, though Junius contended with him concerning this matter, he would not yield, saying at the last that so cruel had been his misfortunes this further ill could not have truth in it. Not even the gods could continue thus to persecute him; their hearts could not be of such stony hardness; they would be softened at the sight of his afflictions and no more torment him. Wherefore he would not send messengers unto the Rulers; he would now seek rest, else would he perish from his weariness.

And, even as the old man declared that he could bear no more, there came a thickening in the air. A breath like the flutter of a bird passed through the chamber, and the torches winked, the light seemed to darken.

And behold! as the two men gaped upon one another, terror causing them to stand straightly, making no sound, the chamber did seem to move, strange noises came unto their ears, the ground beneath their feet did shake, and they fell upon their faces moaning and crying.

Then did all their wits for a space go from them. It seemed as if they were in the grasp of some great being, and were cast about, clawed and clutched at in the blackness. For the winking flames had died; there was naught but a dark void about them.

The measure of the night might not be counted in that dread hour. For time is but as the spread of a bird's wings. It is and it is not. Ye cannot in any manner set bounds upon it when the whole being is possessed with fearfulness, when death appeareth

to come out of the far distance, to bend over you and give you greeting.

Thus it was that, when a wise slave bore into the blackness light from without, he perceived upon the ground, not those masters who ruled all his days with sternness and with the menace of the rods ; he saw only two gibbering, gaping fools, pitiable because of the nakedness of their fear.

In a short space, when they had been restored by wine, and when it was perceived that, though the house was seamed and rent in divers places, yet was there no peril and it was whole, then did the two, who had lain humbled upon the stones, no greater than the beggars of the town, assume once more authority, giving forth commands, casting high looks about them.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAGISTRATES IN PERSON RELEASE PAUL AND SILAS

THERE entered within the chamber affrighted men bearing tidings of the evil that had come upon Philippi.

“ The earth hath given up the dead,” cried one. “ The bodies are cast out from their cold beds.” “ The living people are all devoured by the rocks and stones which the demons have flung up at us from the depths,” cried another. “ I saw, when the rending and shaking ceased, the white shapes of old men and women whose faces have been hidden from us a score of years. They did pass up and down, and I knew that they were dead, and had stolen away from the darkness of the kingdom below.”

“ The stars are all scattered ; many have descended among the vineyards in the country without the town,” cried yet another. “ And these great lamps of Heaven are darkened and dimmed by the wrath of the earth. Truly the end of life hath come, and all shall be gathered away before the dawning of another day.”

Again the Magistrate became fearful. Howbeit, he would not show his dread to these people ; and he commanded the slaves to clear the chamber. Then, in the quiet, the two men and the wise slave did wait for the strokes of the gods, that would in their belief—for all men believe in the hour of peril—destroy Philippi and mayhap the whole earth.

Howsoever, the dawn looked out once more from the dark

casement of the night. And when it dimmed the glimmer of the rush-lights the Chief Magistrate sighed, saying: "Our days are not yet ended."

"The beast hath passed," muttered the slave.

"We must consider what lieth before us," said Junius. "Sir, the prisoned stranger hath been forgotten by thee."

"Thou speakest of the men who were scourged?" the Magistrate asked. "Forasmuch as they assuredly bore ill to this town let us not keep them in our minds. Let them bide where they lie."

"Master," declared the wise slave, "it is meet that thou shouldst speedily deal with them. Thou knowest not what secret harm may be caused by their presence among us."

Now this man spoke boldly at all times when he was alone with the Magistrate, for the Ruler was like unto an empty vessel, and it was needful that the wine of another's wit should fill it. Wherefore he hearkened to the voice of his slave, oft seeking his counsel.

And he turned to the servant, saying: "Who and what are these people who trouble our peace, who cause many to rise up and make tumult?"

The slave answered him, saying: "Some men declare they are the children of the flying evil that passed over Philippi, shadowing it with its wings this night."

"And thou wouldst have us believe that they put spells upon the ground," asked the Magistrate, "causing their foul father to rise from within it and cast about our town as a ship is pitched and tossed upon the sea?"

"Even so, master," the slave answered. "These strangers are not like unto Romans, nor unto Jews or Greeks. They cried not out when they were punished with the rods; when their blood did flow no moaning passed from their lips. They are not mortal; and I would have thee know they raised no insurrection among the Jews. That was an idle tale borne unto thee by the guard, who desired to win thy favour. These two strangers speak in an untoward manner. They utter words that are not seemly concerning the State. Yet they did not in any manner seek to stir up the people, to seize upon authority.

"They seem not to suffer as we suffer; their talk is not as ours. They are mayhap the spawn of gods who mated with the daughters of men, or they are begotten by the flying evil, as is the belief of many. Fear them, but let them go hence. They caused the earth to quake, the hood of night to clasp all Philippi in such folds of blackness many feared the light would come no more unto us. Be wary, therefore, in your dealings with the stranger."

Now both Junius and the Ruler declared they believed not in such folly. The gods, they said, were vain imaginings. These two were but as other men. Yet, even as the Magistrate and the rich merchant thus denied the words of the wise slave, they, in their hearts, believed in them. For they held that the strange terrors of the night had been designed by some power unseen, and they were fretted lest this power should set upon them severally, and mayhap destroy them.

So, after the Ruler had called his slave "many times a fool, and the son of generations of fools," he bade him summon the Magistrates, as it was needful that they should consult together concerning the quaking of the earth.

And when these greybeards met once more their talk dealt not with the safety of the people and the shaking of the ground; they spoke but of the two men from whom it would seem there had sprung all the ills of the night, and all the tumult of the day that was passed.

"We fear them," they murmured. "They will, if they remain among us, raise up much wickedness; they will be as a nest of vipers. Let us, therefore, send them forth from our town, so that their poison may be spread in other cities where men are not wary and watchful."

And the serjeant was summoned, and bidden to go unto the prison, and to command the jailer to loose the two who were in his charge; and he was to command them to go hence from Philippi, and yet not to menace them, but to treat them with all civility.

When the serjeant delivered the word of the Rulers to the jailer, he went gladly into the presence of the saints, telling them that of a truth their God had worked a miracle; they might depart in peace and no harm would be done unto them.

But Paul demanded that the serjeant should deliver unto him the order of the Rulers, and spoke haughtily in answer to him, saying: "We are Roman citizens; we will not steal away as if we were men of no repute or name. We are not thankful to your Rulers for what ye call their mercy. Return unto them and instruct them concerning the offence that hath been committed by them. We were smitten with rods without trial, and we might cause much harm to come unto Philippi if this were made known. It is well for the Rulers that they did not scourge us after what they would deem a trial, else would they have suffered grievously. We shall not go forth from Philippi until the Magistrates themselves have come unto us and declared their error."

The serjeant was amazed at the hardihood of Paul; but so

quelled was he by his presence and his utterance he disputed not his bidding, bearing his tally of words to those in authority.

“There is no end to misfortune when once it entereth within our dwelling,” declared the Chief Magistrate. And he was greatly angered because he might not be angry with these men, because he dared not visit the heat of his wrath upon them.

He rose up, put on his robes, and went unto the prison. And, when he was in the presence of the saints, Paul admonished him, showing his knowledge of the law, and seeking with sharp words to scourge these Rulers, even as he had been scourged by them.

And they dared not in any manner contravene his utterance, for they knew that they were in his power, having erred against him. Wherefore the Chief Magistrate humbled himself to the dust before the saints, not commanding them, but beseeching them for the sake of the peace of the city to go hence.

And, as Paul knew that if he defied the Magistrates he might do harm in hindering the spreading of the teaching of the Gospel, he therefore gave his promise that he would turn his back upon Philippi forthwith.

CHAPTER XIII

LUKE'S GRIEF OVER PHILIPPI

Now the saints departed from the house of the jailer and they went to the abode of Lydia, and there they were welcomed by Luke and Timothy. These two brothers in Christ told them of the night's happenings. They had gone in the company of Syntiche to the door of the house of Junius. And then it had been deemed wiser that they should withdraw and pray for her while she pleaded with her kinsman.

For many hours they entreated the Lord for the prisoners, and besought Him to soften the hearts of the Rulers. For it was held by many that they would sentence Paul and Silas to death on the morrow.

And they welcomed the shaking of the earth, looking upon it as a sign that they had not been deserted by the Lord their God. And they rose up when the quaking ceased, going forth among the people, comforting them as they passed to and fro, crying out with fear, some among them crazed with the terror of this mighty sign of what they deemed was the wrath of the Invisible because they had made

a tumult, and had evilly treated the Slaves of the Fearful One, as they called Paul and Silas.

Then was a council held. Timothy, Paul, Silas, Luke, and another brother in Christ communed together concerning the Church in Philippi.

And the Philippian declared that such was the ignorance of the common people they would in truth hail the two saints as evil magicians if they went once more among them. He spoke of the Gentiles, not of the Jews of that city. Wherefore he deemed that Paul should go hence, and should, in the company of Silas, seek out the tribe of the Hebrews in Thessalonica.

There they might find many who would hearken unto the Gospel and they would not in any manner offend; for the Magistrates were less easily stirred up in that city; and, if the Jews within it came to believe in Christ, they might strengthen those who were of the Church in Philippi.

Now Lydia was summoned, and, when she learned that Paul and Silas must go hence, she was greatly afflicted. She besought them to abide in secret in her dwelling; to remember that time beareth forgetfulness with it; that when a season was passed they might go forth once more among the people.

Howbeit, Luke declared that the Magistrates were sorely dismayed; that they would learn that Paul and Silas tarried within their city; and, because they feared them, they would cast them out and mayhap cause them to be secretly ill-treated; so it was needful for the sake of the Church that they should depart forthwith.

After Paul had readied himself for the journey in the day that followed, Luke came unto him and was cast down in spirit, and spoke unto the Apostle, saying: "I have lost faith, and doubts pursue me. No rest was mine in the night hours. For all my mind hath been shaken by the shame of Philippi."

And Paul questioned him concerning this shame. Then the physician answered him, saying: "Master, the world is a wilderness, and men are as the untamed earth in all the cities of the Empire. Yet I held that the people of Philippi were not as those of other towns. I believed that this city of mine was as a garden of herbs, as a fruitful place to a stony land. Now I am confounded, for I perceive that the people of this town are but as others, and I have assuredly done an ill thing in beseeching thee to come across the sea to Philippi."

Then Paul said unto him: "Brother, have I not told thee that the day would come when thou wouldst give thy love unto all

cities, when thou wouldst no more choose this home of thine, giving unto it all the riches of thy heart? ”

And here did Luke speak once more, saying : “ What of thy vision at Troas? The tale of it greatly uplifted me, and it caused faith to burn within me and joy to reign in my soul. Now is that vision a parable without sense or reason in my sight. Wherefore was it given unto thee? For behold, the people are set against thee, and all our labours are in vain.

“ Those who believed are falling away through fear. I am one who is dumb when I seek to speak unto an assembly of the people. Thou wouldst give Philippi into my charge, and I am not worthy or able to bear this burden.”

Then Paul sought to comfort him, saying : “ It hath been the will of God that we should be cast out and that thou shouldst abide here in the company of Timothy. Let us welcome this ruling. It may be that the time hath come when thou shouldst be as the one shepherd of a flock that is dispersed. In this manner thou shalt learn to be master of thy speech ; thou wilt in truth spread the teaching of the Gospel with greater wisdom than a stranger among thine own people.

“ For thou knowest their ways, and the Spirit will come unto thee, setting in thy mouth the words of truth that will win the people. Wherefore be not cast down because of the ill thing that hath been done in Philippi. Learn from it that thine own city is no greater than another ; that there are foolish and ignorant men in all towns of the earth ; and let ye severally believe that they may yet be won for Christ through the infinite mercy of God.”

CHAPTER XIV

LUKE RECOVERS THE MAGICIANS' MAID AFTER SHE HAS BEEN BEATEN

Now when the tumult was ended, the withered men returned unto their abode, still sore at heart, for the maid had not once been possessed by the Serpent of Knowledge since the hour when Paul had cast him forth from her body.

There had been led unto her men of wealth, who desired tidings of gold, tidings of love, or tidings concerning the falseness of their slaves or of their wives. And the maid had remained dumb in their

presence. She could not utter ; the player who did draw for her the melody from the Invisible no longer governed her being.

And the withered men had many times rebuked her. They would indeed have punished her with rods if the old woman, who was the wife of the eldest of them, had not forbidden such torment.

This woman was named Maena, and she was barren. Wherefore she loved the girl, and had in past times cherished her at the bidding of the withered men. For they had caused the maid to live softly, so that she might not lose the gift of knowledge.

Thus it was that Maena came to love one who was but a slave, who was dear to her as the bird in the nest is to its mother.

She led the maid away from the tormentors, comforting her, speaking kind words. Yet was the girl filled with fearfulness, for she had lived as free from care as the flowers till the invading spirit had been cast from her.

And she asked of Maena whether she could guard her from the rods in the coming days if still the dumbness held, if the Serpent would not utter.

The old woman sighed, saying that she doubted her power, which lay but in hard and bitter words. If her husband were besotted with wine, then he would not heed, and no man could at such times come between him and his purpose.

Now the maid was summoned into the presence of a merchant by her masters. And one of them, drawing her into the dimness, did show her a goad, saying that he would bruise her with it if she remained dumb, and did not render unto the stranger the tale of words concerning his destiny, which he desired.

Then was the maid led before him ; and she closed her eyes, silently beseeching the Serpent to enter within her once more. But it would not come ; and the stranger waited for the tidings sought by him.

And, as she made no sound, his patience went from him. He questioned her concerning his house and the goods with which he traded. He sold precious stones, and he had many in his possession at that time. He asked of the Serpent whether he would sell them for much gold, and whether the house that had been builded by him for his bride would please her. And would they dwell therein ? And would they prosper, living in ease and plenty ?

And, because of her fear, the maid made pretence that the invading spirit was once more within her, and spoke with her lips. She declared that the merchant would prosper, that he would sell these precious stones for much gold, and that his riches would increase with the years. It was ordained that he should live in the house

he had builded till the span of his life was fulfilled, and it would bear to him ease and gladness.

Then the merchant rejoiced. And he praised the maid to her masters, saying that many of his friends had obtained true tidings from her in past days. So was he assured of the truth of the words she uttered concerning him.

And the withered men set a costly robe upon the girl, and it was a sign of their pleasure because she could once more earn moneys for them.

Howbeit, there was great uneasiness in the mind of this child. She lay in the darkness on the night of the quaking of the earth, counting as beads upon a thread her many fearful doubts concerning the words she had uttered, which were not the words of her master, the Serpent of Knowledge.

And, as one who was young and unlearned, she believed, when the earth was cast about, that it was a sign sent unto her alone. It was the Serpent who thus declared his wrath because she had spoken as with his words.

When day came once more she went forth from the place wherein she slept, seeking the old woman. And behold, when she entered into the dwelling, she perceived upon the ground the one who had cherished her. She stirred not when the maid called. She lay as if sleeping.

Then, as the girl drew closer, her eyes fell upon a dark stain of blood, and she saw that the old woman had a grievous wound in her side.

She called her name once more. Then did the workers of magic enter within the chamber, and one cried out, saying : " A stone from the wall fell upon her ; she is dead. Seek not, therefore, to rouse Maena, who will return no more."

And, even as they spoke roughly to her because she had not given them tidings of the rending of the earth, there came into their presence the merchant who had sought the counsel of the maid when it was held that the Serpent possessed her.

And he was very wrathful, demanding his money from the keepers of the girl. And he declared that they were robbers and liars. " Behold, my house hath been torn into many pieces, rent like an old cloth. At the dawning of the day robbers came into my riven dwelling, and I am despoiled of all my treasure. My house is not ; my fortune is not. I am as the beggar of the roads. And this girl hath lied unto me. I shall declare her tale to all men. And ye shall learn through tribulation no more to deceive honest and worthy people."

In this manner the merchant lamented and menaced the maid, so that the darkness of a great fear gathered all about her and fever twisted her mind. Strange cries she uttered, and wildly did she moan when her masters came upon her with rods.

And her terror caused her to faint away. Many hours passed before she was once more whole in mind.

The three workers in magic, who were sorely afflicted, did seek through the drinking of much wine to comfort themselves, and to strengthen them in their hatred of the maid and in their purpose of punishment.

For now they knew that, even if the spirit once more possessed the slave, the people would not hearken to it; they would declare its words were false.

So when evening was come they dragged her out from the hole wherein she lay, and they smote her with many strokes, thus quenching the pain of their blind wrath and greed.

The time came when she cried no more, and lay so still they deemed that she was dead. And they bore her into the dimness of the night, determining that they would cast her body into the river and speak no more of her. For their wrath was spent, and they feared in their hearts lest some evil might light upon them if her spirit was now joined with that other powerful spirit that had come upon her from the Invisible at times.

And one among them said: "Let us bear her body to the door of Lydia's dwelling. The men who have been the cause of all our misfortune, and have thereby caused the death of the maid, have been freed from the prison and abide within this house. Let them perceive the evil they have wrought, and, peradventure, people will believe they have slain the maid."

Then were these wicked men glad, for they held that they would thus be avenged upon Paul. And vengeance was even dearer to them than gold.

Now Luke rose while it was yet dark, because he could not sleep, the saints having determined to go from Philippi on the morrow.

And still the shame that was his because of the evil wrought by the people of his city devoured his whole being, so that he could find no peace anywhere. And even the power to pray was gone from him. For shame is like a demon that entereth within the man, driving out the ruler and governor, seizing upon his whole mind.

All the doors of Lydia's dwelling were fast closed, and Luke could not enter therein. Wherefore he wandered to and fro, waiting for the first bud of the dawn.

And behold, dark shapes came from out the greyness, and men passed him by, bearing some burden with them.

Luke halted and stirred not, fearing they were thieves and had some treasure in their possession, which they sought to bear away before the breaking of the day.

Greatly amazed was he when they set down what he deemed was a precious charge upon the road, and then hastened from it without sound, passing into the pale night.

Once more the saint was alone, and once more his shame besieged his mind, so that it was not until the eye of day opened in the skies that he halted beside the dark burden that had been laid down at the door of the seller of purple.

He swiftly perceived that this was not what he deemed it—that it was the body of a girl who lay like a withered flower on the earth.

Now Luke forgot his own pain in the affliction of another. His heart was stirred with a great compassion, and he sought to draw the fluttering spirit once more into the torn body.

When breath came once more from the lips of the maid, he bore her in his arms to Lydia's door, and, having roused a slave through his knocking, he sought out her mistress; and together they tended the girl, who was waked from her swoon through the care of the physician.

CHAPTER XV

HOW THE MAGICIANS' MAID WAS PRESERVED

It was a time of preparation. Fear of those in authority had, like a cruel frost, parched up the zeal of many. There was much coming and going, and Lydia and a few Brethren, who were faithful believers in Christ, gathered together about the departing saints, so that they might hearken unto sweet counsel and hear within their memory their exhortation and their blessing in coming days.

Now Paul sought rest when he had comforted these afflicted ones. And it came to pass that he, for a short space, abode alone, all withdrawing so that he might secure the needful repose before his journey, upon which he would set out in the company of Silas in the cool of day.

He had not learned of the coming of the girl, for the fret and hurry of the hours and matters of great import had led Luke to keep his lips closed concerning her. Wherefore, when Paul arose

and went forth from the chamber, he knew not the girl who lay in a shelter without.

He perceived that she was sick ; and, as was his wont, he spoke unto her words of cheer. But she rose up declaring that he sought to bring harm upon her, and she was mightily provoked, crying out blasphemous words.

Then did Paul seek to quieten her. And again she reproached him, pouring forth speech that was like unto a polluted stream, raising such clamour Luke entered within the chamber. And when he perceived the girl he divined that the demons did wrestle for her. And he made a sign unto Paul to draw away, for he feared the life might go from the slave, forasmuch as all her bones did shake and her wounds burst forth and bled.

So, while Luke succoured her, tending these hurts, Paul knelt down and prayed that the blast of God might not smite her, for still she continued to utter foul blasphemies.

And behold, the Master of Herbs, with his soothing touch and gentle acts, compelled the sufferer to come out of her frenzy. The evil words, that seemed to be uttered by some man, who spoke deeply and strongly, ceased from sounding through that chamber.

The child lay there white and still, all the strange evil gone from her face.

Now that she was quieted, the Brethren communed together concerning her. And Luke told them the tale she had given unto him in the early day concerning her punishment by the withered men, and how they had cast her down, when she lay in a swoon, at the door of Eudias, such being a name by which Lydia was known.

Now slaves were, in the eyes of most men, accounted as the beasts of the field. Oft-times, if they were weak and ill-made, they were accounted lower than the sheep, the oxen, or the asses.

And one of the Brethren, a Philippian, said unto the saints : " This maid is but a chattel ; she was bought for a price by the workers of magic. Let her be borne unto them again. If they learn that the girl liveth and is within this house, they will declare that Lydia stole her away from them in the night-time, and evil will come of it."

Luke made answer : " She is a child, and our Master Christ hath bidden us cherish the little ones. Still is she in her early years. These men will slay her in their wrath if she is yielded up to them."

" Thou mayest not rob a man of his beast," declared another ; " thou canst not withhold from him his slave, one who hath not a spirit within her, who is no better than the dumb creatures who do move about the earth."

Then Silas lifted up his voice, saying : " Harken unto the words of Christ concerning the bondman and the bondwoman. He declared the bond as well as the free are the children of our Father in Heaven. Do therefore unto them what ye would that they should do unto you. If they serve you well, praise them, giving them meat and raiment. If they serve you ill, punish them not with strokes, but show them that, as ye deal righteously with them, so should they render unto you the same measure.

" Strive with their ignorance. Let them learn that in each building every stone hath its appointed place. Some are hidden away and bear the burden of many ; and thus do they fulfil their part. Some are beautifully wrought, are set in the high places, and delight the eye ; yet they do but fulfil their part also. Wherefore it is meet that ye should render unto the bondman the love ye would render unto a brother, cherishing him in his need, succouring him in his affliction.

" Such was the teaching of our Master Jesus. Now this maid, who is but a child, will assuredly die if she is returned unto the workers of magic, who are workers of evil. The foul words she hath uttered were set in her heart by them, the blasphemies she hath cried were the blasphemies they spoke in her presence when they conversed with one another.

" Let the Brethren seek, therefore, to buy this maid from her masters, so that her life may be saved, so that her spirit may not go down into the Pit."

And the will of the Brethren was declared unto Lydia, and she sought out one of her kin who believed not in Christ, yet was a good man who desired to serve her.

The maid was borne into his house privily. Then he went unto the workers of magic and offered them a price for the maid, whom, he declared, he had found lying upon the road.

Now if these men had known that the gold was Lydia's they would have rejected it, for they knew that she had sheltered the saints ; but, as it was rendered unto them by a stranger, they gladly received it ; and thus was the maid freed from her bondage.

When she was once more whole she served in the household of the seller of purple. And for a short space she was evil in her utterance, and would not believe in the living God.

Howsoever, Luke strove with Satan for her soul. And it came to pass that because she loved the Master of Herbs, who had tended her in her sore sickness, he prevailed in the latter end. And she was baptised after a season had passed, becoming, as the other slaves in the household of Lydia, a member of the Church of Christ.

CHAPTER XVI

THEMESIUS CAUSES TROUBLE : THE HEALING OF CLEMENT

Now, after Paul and Silas had set out upon their journey for Amphipolis, Luke strove to gather the believers together once more. And some for a space made pretence, because they feared Lydia, that they were faithful brethren in Christ.

But the wind of evil talk passed through the city. Themesius sought to make war upon the saints, and many and wicked were his devices.

He went in unto Lydia and spoke words that were smooth as milk. He declared what he called the mind of the rich Philippians —“ All are turned against this Jesus. They believe that He is not a God, but a demon ; that He hath caused the earth to quake, and that further ills will fall upon Philippi if the Jews hearken unto His followers.”

And Lydia answered him, saying : “ Thou hast gone about the town making a noise like a dog, setting fears in the hearts of the people. I know thy ways, thou crafty one. I will not hearken unto thee, for I believe that Jesus is the Sinless One, and that He was hanged upon a tree so that all, through His dying, should be saved if they repented and believed. Go hence and trouble me no more.”

Then did Themesius menace her, and his words were like wasps, and poisoned Lydia's peace ; for he declared unto her that he had desired her in marriage, and that if she would not yield unto him he would set the rich men and women of the town against her, so that they would not buy goods from her. He would affright them with tales concerning her zeal for Paul and Silas, her zeal for the God of the stranger. Then would she suffer loss, and all her trading go from her.

And Lydia answered him, saying : “ If it is needful, I shall surrender my house and all my possessions for the sake of Jesus, my God. I would be a beggar and a slave rather than give up my faith in Christ. There is no adversity that can cause me to falter or to fail. For my belief is more than my life to me, more than all the treasures of earth. Wherefore thou mayest rage as thou wilt against me ; I shall not yield.”

And Themesius fulfilled his menaces, for he was devoured by a base anger. He sought out those who bought rich apparel and spoke cunningly unto them, so that they went no more to buy goods

from Lydia. And she found that her trade dwindled, that the robes fashioned by those who worked for her were not sold, and daily she lost money, yet she feared naught. She desired but to work for the Master Christ. And so, though her possessions in this world dwindled, she gathered a goodly store in Heaven.

Howbeit, those who had for a short space still held to their faith in Christ, now, through fear, did cast His Cross from them. Because of the hatred of the people, they sought one another no more in the fellowship of prayer, in the breaking of bread, in the tasting of wine, in all observances of the saints.

And when Luke visited these wavering, affrighted Brethren, he learned from them that they had been menaced by those who traded with them, who bought of their goods, or who benefited them in kind.

And the Jews declared: "We believe thy words are true, and we would, if the teachings of Christ found favour with those in authority, gladly hold fast to the doctrines you teach and to our faith in Christ. But we may not lose all for Him. We have wives and children. It is needful we should earn our daily bread. We cannot, therefore, serve thy Master, who dwelleth in one world while we dwell in another."

I have told you that, when Luke lifted up his voice in the assembly, speech would fail him. Yet was he a cunning scribe, and could set down on parchment all the wondrous sayings of the Master.

And now he perceived that the time had come when it was needful that he should speak out boldly, not fearing, not caring, giving unto the people the gold of his written word.

For many days no saint had preached by the riverside. Tidings had been borne unto them privily that the Magistrates would punish anyone who spoke thus openly of Christ. So only certain Jews assembled on the Sabbath together, practising the observances according to the law of Moses.

It was the early season of the year. And it came to pass that, on the Sabbath, at the time when these people would disperse, Luke rose up among them, calling unto them to bide with him, for he would give them tidings of the mystery that lieth beyond the tomb. And, even as he raised up his voice and silence fell upon all, there did sound in his hearing noble and beautiful speech; and as it came unto him word by word he did utter it.

"Brethren, some among you have doubted and feared. Ye have not known, even through baptism, the Spirit that descendeth upon those who yearn for it in all singleness of heart. Without the blessing of the Spirit ye shall indeed fail, and your prayers shall be as empty in their sounding as the lonely wind.

“Wherefore do ye thus falter and fall away? Ye have not faith; ye cannot believe that, if ye believe, ye shall have with you the All Powerful One, ye shall be guarded and guided by the Holy Spirit of God.

“Believe, therefore, in Christ, and ye shall not lose all, but gain all; ye shall win to perfect peace and understanding in the Kingdom of our Father.

“The life of the body is as the life of the young grass; it groweth up, withereth, and passeth away. But all ye men of Philippi possess souls, which do not thus pass away; which pass from out what is but a vain show, a bewilderment, into the clear light of the world to come.

“Therefore let ye give no more thought to the needs of the body. Let all your heart be set on the needs of the soul. Is the raiment of man, forsooth, of greater worth than man? The hour cometh when the Spirit shall reign upon the earth, when this town, this land of yours, shall go hence, passing away as a season, breaking up, dissolving.

“Hasten, therefore, before that dread time to prepare for the life of the Spirit. Have faith in Jesus, who is truly the Messiah. Believe on Him and ye shall be saved.”

Now Clement had come unto the assembly because he had learned that words might be uttered concerning Jesus. And he desired to make a tumult among the Jews, whom he hated. He rose up, therefore, crying out upon Luke, declaring: “This man is one of those who plotted against the Emperor and the common-weal. Let him be cast forth from Philippi, and we shall thus be freed from this evil brood that came across the seas unto us.”

Then did certain youths, who were not of Judæa, seek to lay hands upon Luke. And they cast him to the ground; and he would have died, mayhap, beneath the feet of many, if certain Jews, who had been angered by the whispered mockery of Clement’s followers, had not made a ram of their living bodies, casting themselves against the people, causing them to scatter and disperse before them.

Then some cried, “Peace! Let us go quietly to our homes.”

And there was a silence, a stilling, as when the wind is hushed and its brother tarrieth, not speeding from out another quarter.

Howbeit, the hearts of men are evil when their blood is stirred. One slung a stone, and it smote the forehead of Clement. He was felled to the ground, and other stones followed, and many were

the hurts of the Greeks and the Jews. And there would have been a bloody and grievous tumult if word had not been borne by a Jew that the guard was coming in all haste.

Whereupon the assembly was dispersed as wheat-ears in harvest. Soon there remained by the riverside only the two saints, Timothy and Luke, and one who was a faithful brother and server.

He said unto them : " Tidings of this new turmoil will be borne unto the Magistrates. Assuredly ye will be seized, and mayhap ye will be condemned to death. Let us hasten to my dwelling, and there shall ye be hidden till this tumult is forgotten."

And Luke and Timothy went in the company of this brother to his abode. And because there fell a grievous hail, and it thundered, no man stayed them ; the guard went not abroad till it was overpast. And thus were Luke and Timothy in a sure and safe hold when search was made for them.

It came to pass that Clement became sick unto death ; for there arose a fever from the wound in his forehead. Wherefore his parents were much distraught ; he was the one son of their age, and great was their yearning for him.

Those who had skill in the tending of wounds were all summoned to him, and they declared that he would die, that naught but a marvel would save him. They said unto the Magistrate, " if it is the gods' pleasure his life may be saved, but no skill of man can keep within the body the fleeing spirit."

Then the mother mourned and lamented, and all the day she cried out against her husband, reproaching him for this great sorrow. And he was distraught because he could not in any manner silence her.

Howbeit, the wise slave counselled him, saying : " Let ye gather together certain noble women, and mayhap, if they come in unto her, they will comfort her and hush her cries. Let her not perceive thee any more, and let these who are her friends be assembled about her."

And behold, when four of the women of repute in Philippi bided in her chamber, the wife of the Magistrate ceased from her crying. And, having reviled her husband for a short space, she remembered once more her sorrow, and asked of these women whether they knew any marvel which might be wrought that would preserve her son alive.

Three of them in turn did counsel her to be prepared for the passing of the youth, to resign herself to what was the will of the gods.

And, even as they spoke, Syntiche, who was the fourth woman,

cried out : " It is not the will of the gods, forasmuch as there is but the living God, who ruleth all the world, who did send His Son to walk upon the earth for a brief while in the guise of man.

" Behold, this Son of the Most High did give unto certain of His Disciples the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost. And those who were thus dowered can work marvels if it be the will of God. One of these men abideth in Philippi, and assuredly, if he will entreat the Lord, his Master, he can call back Clement from the gates of death."

Then the mother besought Syntiche to send in all haste for this worker of marvels, for her son was dying.

Syntiche declared unto her : " This man is named Luke, and he was the preacher at the riverside when the tumult arose, it being devised by his enemies so that he might be cast into prison. For they hate him and are jealous of him. Now, if the Ruler maketh a vow that this holy saint shall go free, and shall be held in honour in this town, then will I discover him unto you and he will heal your son."

And the mourning mother straightway gave orders that her husband should be summoned, and the tale of Luke and the needful vow were related unto him.

He was one who, even in the hour of his sorrow, desired to abide by the rule and observance. Wherefore he declared himself on this wise :

" If the offender can save the life of my son, I will let him go in peace, but he must not tarry in this city. He shall not continue to cause disorder to arise among the people. Such is my will. If he cannot cure Clement he shall be bound and put in hold."

Syntiche was wroth, and would not, she said, discover the Master of Herbs for those who might evilly handle him. And the Magistrate menaced her, for he declared that she was plotting against the commonweal. Yet she held firmly to her words. And the sorrowful mother cried out upon her husband, so that he yielded in a measure, though not in full measure.

It was determined that, if Luke failed to cure the dying son, he would be given his freedom and would be banished from the town. If he worked a marvel, and drew back the life once more into the body, he might dwell in peace in Philippi, and honour would be rendered unto him.

So Luke passed once more through the streets of the city, and was led unto the sick man, who lay as in a swoon, his body wasted, his colouring of a strange blueness, as if the limbs had already died and were but as the clay to which they should return.

Many came within the chamber. And no word was uttered as Luke passed his hands over the youth; and he drew from the vessel certain juices of herbs, anointing the wounded parts, with careful hands binding up what was needful. And, as the people watched, Luke knelt down, praying unto our Lord Jesus Christ, beseeching Him that this youth might not pass hence while still he was in the bloom of his years.

And in the after-time some declared that they had seen about the fingers of the saint a white mist that was pale as the dews of dawn. It rested above the wound upon the brow; and the Master of Herbs, who had arisen, held his hands outspread as if in blessing, and ever the whiteness hovered below them, seeming to gather and verily to enter within the wounded part.

Now, in the after-time, some declared that they perceived a flower like unto a flame above the head of the saint, and there streamed from out its glow the white radiance that came from beneath the fingers of the one who thus stood beside the dying man.

Howbeit, others declared that they saw naught; yet they were smitten with a dumbness, a stilling of all their parts, so that it would seem as if their bodies were not of them, were drawn away.

The spell of silence was broken by the sighing of the young man, whose limbs stirred, whose arms were raised to Luke's; and then fell back once more as the Master of Herbs stroked the air above his limbs and whispered words that no man could understand.

When the stroking was ended, he turned him about, passing through the press of the people, uttering no word; and upon his face was graven the sickness and the suffering of the youth.

He had asked that he should abide alone in the hours that followed upon his work. And when he came forth once more into the presence of the people the strange image of another's pain, another's weakness, was gone from his countenance.

And behold, Clement also was changed. The fleeing spirit returned once more into his body, the bloom of life appeared once more upon his limbs; and he, who had been dumb for many days, asked for water and for food.

CHAPTER XVII

LUKE FAILS TO HEAL JUNIUS

Now it came to pass that there was much talk among the people concerning the miracle of healing wrought by the Master of Herbs. And in the closets of the city there was whispering among men of repute concerning this Jesus who was named the Christ by Luke and by the strangers who had been of His company.

I would have you know that when the Master of Herbs abode at Philippi before the coming of the saints, he had hearkened unto the talk of the men of repute and learning. And because they spoke much of the corruption of the times, of the failing of righteousness and virtue, and that no man knew of God or had understanding of the mystery of life and death, Luke had judged that these men were prepared for the sowing of the seed of the Word ; the hour was with them when they could joyfully receive the light and the truth, being one in Christ.

Howbeit, when Paul and Silas were come unto Philippi, these men of repute and of learning would not visit the assembly by the riverside. And in a later time they could not perceive that the tumult and scandal that arose were but as the foam upon the wave. So they did draw themselves away, and they turned themselves about, blushing as a woman.

Ye will perceive through all the ages, in every land, that the men of repute and learning will, like their kin in Philippi, hold in scorn what is new and strange. And because of the contention of lewd persons, and because of the turmoil made by the common people, they will not entertain the doctrines that are taught, however true they be, however beautiful.

Now, after the healing of Clement the Chief Magistrate held a feast in honour of Luke. And there were bidden to it those in authority in the town. Wherefore there came a change in the minds of those learned persons who had derided the teachings of Paul, who had declared that there was no more reason in his words than in the babbling of the waters of a brook.

They said one to another : " Who is this Jesus ? Who is this Son of God of whom the stranger hath spoken ? In past times Luke did heal the sick with cooling herbs, yet he did not cause to halt any of those who were bound for the shores of death. Now, in the name of this Jesus, he hath drawn back from the Kingdom of the Invisible

the spirit of Clement ; he hath caused a body that was dead to come alive. Let us enquire into this matter."

So, in the days that followed the feast, Luke was once more sought out by the men of repute who would not hold speech with him when he was in the company of Paul. And they asked him to give them tidings of these new doctrines which had been preached by the stranger.

"For the wisdom of our fathers appeareth in our eyes to be vanity," they declared unto him.

And Luke made answer : "It is well that ye should have such understanding in this matter of knowledge. For, of a truth, in past days ye possessed but the treasures of darkness ; ye did study the learning of the fallen spirits, and ye believed in their cunning words.

"Yet is such knowledge as theirs bitter as the sea ; it is as worm-wood and ashes, bearing unto men a rottenness that causeth his soul to decay and foulness to corrupt the whole being."

"Behold, Jesus my Master hath borne into this world the treasures of light, knowledge that is pure and undefiled, that true wisdom which cometh only from the source of all life, from the living God."

And Luke declared unto these Philippians many of the sayings of Jesus, and he did show them that this world was as a dim chamber in which were fearsome shadows and strange evils. Whereas the Kingdom of Christ was as beautiful and free as the wide earth before men and beasts walked upon it.

"The simple as well as the wise shall be the children of our Master Christ. All men will bow the knee to Him when He cometh in His might and His glory. He careth not for offerings of silver or of gold, for offerings of blood. He desireth only that those who believe in Him shall be pure in heart, and shall in all things seek to do His will."

These men of repute believed not in the gods of their fathers, and they had been led into the slippery, deceitful ways of night because belief was gone from them.

Now did Christ's words come unto them as the dawn of the first day of earth. And they delighted in His teachings, and those who had courage were baptised and believed in the Saviour.

Many who were beggars, after the healing of Clement, believed and were also baptised ; so that there was a goodly company of the faithful in Philippi. And they were first won by the miracle, and then did slowly gather within themselves the store of Christ's words as they were spoken by Luke and Timothy.

Howbeit, the power of the Spirit abideth not always with the

saints of God. And as the wind riseth and falleth, so did the fortunes of the Brethren in Philippi.

It came to pass that Junius was smitten with a grievous fever, and they sent word unto Luke, saying : " The power of thy God is with thee ; come and heal, therefore, this sick man."

Much talk and stir was there among the people. And the multitude assembled without the house while Luke, who was within, did strive with the evil that possessed Junius, causing him to be shrunken, to wither away as the fading leaf in harvest-time.

Yet, though the saint prayed with all his might for the coming of the Spirit, there came no stir within his being, no lighting up of all his soul. For God had willed that Junius should die.

At sunset his body lay still and his spirit passed.

Word was borne unto the multitude who were waiting without for tidings of a new marvel. And they made a great outcry when they learned that the physician had failed to heal the rich man. And those who were within the chamber of death desired to lead Luke forth by a secret way, so that violent words might not be flung at him, so that he should escape the wrath of the people.

Howsoever, Luke appeared unto them. And, such was the nobility of his mien, those who cried out against him, who called him a vain dissembler, a foul wizard who preached not truth but lies, were hushed, and compelled for a space to hearken unto him.

He spoke on this wise : " Junius hath died, and I cannot draw him back from the dark way into which he entereth. The Holy Spirit of God might have come unto me and healed him, but it was not meet in the eyes of the Lord that Junius should live.

" Wherefore He would not bestow on me the power to heal him. I would have you know that, though my Master would not give unto me the life of this man, yet shall He again and yet again, if He willeth, give unto me the lives of others ; and no jot or tittle of the teachings of Jesus are changed because Junius hath died.

" The words of Christ abide with you always, and, if ye believe on Him, death shall have no dominion over you. When your spirits rise out of your bodies, it shall be as if they passed into a new day. They shall know no sorrow when they thus enter into the Kingdom of the Blessed.

" Wherefore this death, about which ye make a turmoil, is a little thing, no more than the casting off by a tree of its coat of leaves. No more than the sleep of winter is this death.

" Believe, therefore, that Junius is not dead ; he sleepeth heavily and hath no dreams. And he will arise from that slumber, and, as a new man, he will face into the light of the Kingdom of God."

When Luke ceased from speaking there arose no sounds from among the people. They were held as in the net of the thrower by this vision of a world beyond the tomb. Each man bethought him of the hour when death would still his limbs, stealing his body's breath. And they wondered whether they would enter into the dark ways, or whether it was the folds of a deep sleep that would gather about them. And the lonely mystery of dying caused them silently to disperse and to seek their homes.

Though Luke had quelled the people with his words, yet they did not blot out the harm that came from the slipping away of the spirit of Junius into the infinite.

Some said one thing and some another ; and a cloud gathered about the saints once more. Howbeit, though certain drew away from the Brethren, becoming enemies of the Cross of Jesus, yet there remained faithful a number of persons of repute, and always was Lydia steadfast in her belief.

She had given unto those saints who were beggars much of her store of wealth, and she did send by a sure hand offerings of money and of apparel unto Paul and Silas.

And while these two abode in Thessalonica they received again and yet again gifts from the seller of purple, who had added unto what was hers the offerings of others, so that there was no woman in Philippi who denied herself more than this good woman, who, possessing little, possessed all, which was the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE ENCOUNTER ON THE ROAD TO THESSALONICA

AND Paul and Silas were heavy of heart as they set out again upon the road to Thessalonica.

It is not easy even for a great master like Paul or a saint like Silas ever to face forward into new cities and strange ways, to pass through tempest and darkness, and ever to feel that there is the white, still day beyond.

They bore letters unto certain Jews of Thessalonica who were of the kin of Sheva, and they knew that in that city there would be work for them, and so they might provide themselves with bread.

After much journeying they came nigh to Amphipolis, and they

set themselves down, seeking rest. And behold, there passed that way a man who was twisted in his body, and there was weariness writ upon his face. He walked in an ungainly manner, as if he were filled with new wine, and he fell at the feet of the saints, lying there as in a swoon.

They perceived that it was not wine that thus caused him to stumble and fall ; it was the need for bread that had stricken him.

And, when water and food had caused the wanderer to come again unto himself, the saints conversed with him.

He hung down his head, saying : " Masters, I have not the price of the food thou hast given me. And, though I am homeless and possess naught, yet I have vowed that I shall never beg, and shall I take no service from any man unless I can requite him. In what manner, therefore, may I pay thee in hire for this timely succour of thine ? "

And Silas spoke unto him, saying : " We are followers of Jesus, the Son of the One God, and He hath bidden us share our possessions with others. There should be no pride, brother, in sharing with us our repast. Our God would call no man a beggar, for all who live and move are His children ; and, therefore, when we possess abundance, we give little in thus rendering thee a share of what we eat.

" We will take but one service of thee—the remembrance of our offering to thee in thy need. In the coming days thou wilt prosper, mayhap, and when one who is hungry passeth by thy door, even though he doth not seek thee out, search thou for him. That is the price of the bread and wine we have rendered unto thee on this eve.

" Thou art only a beggar if in thy prosperity thou forgettest the need of others. So be not shamed in this, thine hour of need. In thine hour of ease, when thou turnest aside from the poor who hunger, then, indeed, shalt thou be lower than the meanest amongst those wanderers whom thou deridest mayhap as beggars."

And the stranger was much moved by the words of Silas, and by the story of Jesus as Paul did relate it unto him. And, when they ceased from speaking, he besought them to go with him into Amphipolis. There work for hire awaited him, and he desired that the two saints should not pass by the city of his birth.

" Behold," he said unto them, " it is a brave town, girded with waters, set in them as a silver ring. Ye will find many who will be glad to hearken to your tidings of Jesus, the great Lord of the earth. Pass it not by, therefore, but be of my company ; for I fain would hearken again to your marvellous words."

And Silas was sorely tempted to enter into this city and abide in

it. But Paul called to his mind the hour they entreated the Lord in prayer at Philippi. And there had come to them in the silence the sure knowledge that they should preach the Word in Thessalonica.

Wherefore they gave unto the young man the greetings of the road. And he was cast down and weeping as they passed from his sight.

I would have ye know that when Paul and Silas taught any man who had understanding in the quiet of the fields, they could move and stir him so that he was exalted as by the melody of harps, and tears might be drawn from him as from this stranger, who had been sorely afflicted by misfortune and hardship in past days. So was he in heart and mind prepared for their words.

Silas had bidden the young man follow him. And he had sorrowed because, having no more faith in life, he feared to turn from the work and shelter that was before him and set out once more upon the hard road.

CHAPTER XIX

PAUL'S FIRST PREACHING IN THESSALONICA

WHEN their journey was ended, the saints abode in the dwelling of a Jew, who was known to his own people as Joseph, and to the Gentiles as Jason.

He was a man of many parts. And when he learned from the writing that Paul and Silas bore tidings concerning the promises of the Prophets in the Scriptures, he was eager in his welcome to the Brethren, and offered them food and shelter.

Now Jason was poor, and he had many children who must needs be fed. The saints, therefore, declared that they would work for hire, and thus would they be a burden to no man.

Paul fell sick, and yet he would not yield to his pain, but laboured daily, wrestling with the weakness of his flesh, refusing to yield unto it.

For he ever declared that, if he failed and faltered because of his body's need, he would at some time fail and falter in the things of the Spirit.

He was wasted, and could scarcely walk, on the first Sabbath, when the time came for him to lift up his voice in the Synagogue and bear testimony unto Christ.

Yet, such was the firmness of his purpose to speak in that hour, he would not permit Silas to preach in his place to the congregation.

And, because of the greatness of his yearning for the souls of those of his race in that town, the Holy Spirit came unto him and dowered him with the strength that was needful ; so that he spoke with the firmness and might of a priest in the bloom of his years, in the pride of his first manhood.

Now many tales had been borne unto the Jews who hearkened unto Paul concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Some had declared that He sought to lead the Jews in revolt against the Romans ; others had borne tidings unto this people that He was a great healer, whose enemies He had caused to be slain ; and yet others said that He was an impostor who had set Himself up against the High Priest, wherefore he was punished by the Governor, who had hanged Him upon a tree.

And there were certain Jews, but lately come from Antioch, who declared that Christ was a great prophet, whose like had not been known since Isaiah had declared the Word of the Lord to His chosen people.

So the Synagogue could scarcely contain the press of the multitude that thronged within it, and all the doors were opened. And, gazing upon these Jews, Paul was moved to the roots of his being. For they were dear to him, his own people, yet were they strangers to the land in which they abode.

And he spoke the words of the Scriptures, showing them that Moses had been a witness unto Christ, that Elias and the Prophets had declared His coming.

“ ‘ He shall be called the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting Father, the Wondrous Counsellor.’ Such was the testimony of Isaiah,” declared Paul. “ And from his lips was delivered the promise that the Messiah would reign over His people, bearing peace unto them if they would hearken to His words.”

And Paul showed how John the Baptist had come as His fore-runner in the appointed time, and how the Master Jesus had, with many wonders and miracles and with the wisdom of His teachings, made plain His Godhead unto the people.

Then Paul spoke of His shameful death, which was needful so that all men should be redeemed from sin through His blood and through His torment.

And Paul set the crown upon this exhortation when he spoke of the rising of the Master from the tomb, and of those days when the Crucified One once more taught His Disciples and walked among them.

So earnest was the Apostle in his speech, so wrought upon was

his body by his Spirit, that all who hearkened were amazed. They sought not to reason concerning his teaching ; they could but exult in its wonder and in its strangeness. They went forth from the Synagogue declaring one to another that they had listened to a mighty man of God, who, of a truth, was possessed of great wisdom and power.

But in the days of the week, when the Jews had considered the meaning of his words, they were cast down, and some among them spoke with bitterness of him, since they held that he had failed to expound the Scriptures, because he had been deceived in his belief that Jesus was the Messiah.

And Jason said unto Paul : " The Brethren murmur and peep, and they utter dark sayings concerning thee. For we have ever believed that the Messiah would come unto His people as a conqueror, who would cast off from them the yoke of the oppressor, who would put the Gentile in Judæa to the edge of the sword, who would set the nation of the Jews above all the heathen, giving them dominion over the whole earth.

" Jesus, your Master, whom ye have called the Messiah, hath been slain in a shameful manner at Jerusalem, and a Gentile hath sentenced Him. Surely the Messiah, when He cometh, shall assume Lordship over the Gentile ? "

And Paul made answer : " Of a truth, brother, thou hast spoken well. Jesus, my Master, shall be Lord of all the Gentiles. He shall rule through the Spirit, and His Kingdom shall be of the Spirit.

" When the Sabbath cometh again, I will show the people that I have not deceived them, that I have expounded the Scriptures truly, according to the promise that was given to our fathers in the ancient days."

CHAPTER XX

PAUL CONTENDS WITH NETHAN

THERE abode in Thessalonica a learned Jew named Nethan, who was an earnest searcher of the Scriptures, and went much among the Gentiles, seeking to win them to a belief in the Lord of Hosts.

It was his dream that all men should in time come to believe in the faith of his fathers. And early and late he laboured among the Greeks, striving to gather as proselytes those who were of good repute who would hearken to his words.

Now he was an Elder, and he sent greetings unto the Pharisees in Jerusalem by the hand of one named Imnah. This friend was the comrade of his dreams, and shared in all his labours.

Together they designed a mighty change in the hearts of the Gentiles, who would hold, when they came to believe and were circumcised, that Jerusalem was the Holy City of the God of all the earth, His Temple—as Mount Sinai was to Moses—the Holy Place wherein God communed with the elect.

Now Nethan might not go from Thessalonica, but Imnah went up to Jerusalem to worship at the Feast of the Passover, and to speak with certain learned men of the Sanhedrin concerning the need for the Elders among the Jews in every Roman city to cast out their nets and to draw within them the people in each town.

Thus would Judæa conquer the Gentile through the words of the Scriptures, and those who ruled over them would be governed by the chosen people; and so would the captivity be changed and pass away through the winning of the Roman and the Greek to the teaching of Moses and the Prophets.

When Imnah returned to Thessalonica, all the Jews spoke of Paul, and it was the week that followed the Sabbath when he preached in the Synagogue.

And many doubts had arisen in the mind of Nethan concerning this new preacher who had come across the sea. And when he had hearkened unto the tidings of Imnah concerning Jerusalem, these doubts turned to fears. He learned that Paul had disputed at Jerusalem and at Antioch with those Pharisees who claimed that the Gentiles should be circumcised and practise all the rites and observances as ordained by Moses.

The Apostle was, therefore, in the eyes of this Elder, one who might pervert the people, causing the ignorant to stumble and mayhap to turn from the faith of the Jews.

Now Nethan was slow in the ordering of his deeds. He perceived that it was needful that he should cause discomfiture to fall upon the stranger, that he should be dealt with subtly by argument and reason, so that the people who praised his words should be led to perceive that he was but as a hollow tree, that there was only emptiness in his teaching.

Then would they be turned against his dangerous doctrines, and they would not, if they were Gentiles, stray away from the fold of Judæa.

In Thessalonica certain rich proselytes gave moneys to the Synagogue; and Nethan, though he was devout and a noble dreamer for his people, believed that wealth and powerful persons should be the pillars to uphold the faith that was to be as the sun

lighting up all the world, drawing it away from chaos and darkness.

So, on the second Sabbath, Nethan rose up in the Synagogue, and he sought not to tax Paul with the looseness of his teaching at Antioch concerning the Gentiles. He sought first to cause him to fall into disfavour with the people by saying that Jesus, whom he called the Messiah, was falsely named; that the Messiah, according to the words of the Prophets, would come in might and glory, and all the nations of the earth would be set under His feet and under the feet of His chosen people.

This Jesus, Nethan contended, had offended the Sanhedrin, had been declared an impostor by the High Priest, and, therefore, He was but an envoy of Satan who had taken upon Himself the flesh of man so that He might deceive the Lord's people.

And Silas lifted up his voice and spoke, not in his own words, but in the words of Jesus, showing the people that the teachings of the Master were pure as a little child, simple as the mind of a shepherd of the hills, rich with a wisdom that was greater than all the learning of the Priests, and marvellous with the truth that could have come but from God alone.

When Silas ceased from speaking, Paul rose up, saying: "The Prophets have shaped for you the image of Jesus when they declared unto you that He would suffer for the sins of His people, that He would bear the burden of all sorrows, that He would know the anguish that possesseth the hearts of the oppressed.

"The Prophets were persecuted and slain by our own people, and Jesus also was tormented and caused to be slain by the men of our own race; and thus were the Scriptures fulfilled.

"Jesus was wounded and bruised for our sins so is he in very truth the Messiah. For His pain and woe were thus foretold by the holy men of God. Through the death of Christ shall men be saved if they will believe, if they will take into their hearts His teaching, and live according to the wisdom of His words."

Drops of sweat did stand upon the brow of Paul as he wrestled for these people with much reasoning and with fervent speech. And though Nethan contended with him, yet again he could not match himself against the saint.

And those who watched the countenances of the people read upon many of them their belief in the words of Paul. And, when all were dispersed, the tidings of the preaching in the Synagogue spread throughout the city.

Many Gentiles, hearing of the man of learning who had come to Thessalonica with strange tidings, greatly desired to hearken unto him.

And one came unto Jason and asked him whether the teacher who lodged with him would speak in the market-place, so that the heathen might hearken unto the truths he taught.

Howbeit, Paul declared that he would not speak unto the Gentile until the third Sabbath was over-passed. For he reasoned within himself, and he divined that Nethan, and others who were of his mind, would strive to turn those Jews who desired to believe against the doctrines he delivered unto them.

And he warned Jason, saying: "Brother, I have preached the Word of the Lord in many cities, and ever the Evil One riseth up and seeketh to pervert the hearts of those who would believe in Jesus, seeketh to ensnare me by stirring up envy and jealousy. There cometh a time of tribulation for us in the city. We shall, mayhap, be despised and persecuted for righteousness' sake.

"Wherefore I would desire thee to cast me forth from thy household, if thou art not prepared to face such trial for the sake of Jesus, the Son of God."

And Jason cast himself at the feet of Paul, saying: "Verily, master, I have hearkened on this Sabbath unto one who is greater than any man I have ever known. If thou art, as thou hast declared, the least among the servants of Jesus, then in truth He is God. And shall I forsake thee because of the promise of persecution? Shall I turn from the messenger of the living God?"

"It were better for me that I should be as the dung of the fields than that I should deal with thee treacherously in thine hour of need, O wondrous man of God."

And Paul was much moved by the words of this simple Jew. And he baptised him and those of his household forthwith, blessing them, declaring them the first members of the Church of Christ in Thessalonica.

CHAPTER XXI

EVAGRIUS AND THEONE

IN the days of the week, at the hour when the labours of Paul for his bread were ended, he spoke unto certain devout persons who came unto the house of Jason and hearkened to his words.

There was among them a young Greek named Evagrius,¹ and he attended these discourses in dark habits, and his face was hidden. For he was sprung from the noblest stock in Thessalonica, and he

¹ Evagrius was also known as Aristarchus.

desired that these Jews should not know that he was among them. Only Jason was aware of his name and his station. And Jason had promised to hold his name as a secret, breathing it to no man.

Now Evagrius was weary of all things under the sun. He had studied in the schools of Athens, and had found no ease for his yearnings in the subtle parables of the wise men of that town; he had journeyed in many lands; he had sought in women and in feasting for the joys of Heaven; and still were they denied him. Neither learning nor riches could give unto him that heart-ease, that sure peace, that is the heritage of the children of God.

When he returned once more unto Thessalonica, a certain noble woman of the Greeks named Theone was worshipped by the young men of his generation. She did ravish the minds of all who beheld her, and poets shaped their dreams about her.

Her husband was old, and like unto a moth that gnaweth what is comely, destroying it. Yet he could not destroy the beauty of Theone, nor in any manner rule her ways.

She sinned much, and was weary because the world, having given her all, had given her naught. Her husband's treasure was no joy to her. She lay upon beds of ivory, and she was clothed in rich apparel that was like unto a peacock in its many hues. And slaves and the merriment of feasting, the wit of the poets and their worship, might be commanded by her in full measure. And yet she wearied of them; great was the heaviness of her spirit because all she could desire was rendered unto her.

She knew not sorrow nor pain at any time, wherefore she knew not joy. She had hearkened to the wisdom of the philosophers, but she had no knowledge of the wisdom of the Spirit. She had plucked all the fruits from the tree of life, and they were, for all their glory, but vanity in her eyes.

She had never striven or suffered; she had never known denial. Wherefore she was sick at heart and miserable in soul.

Howbeit, Evagrius, when he returned unto Thessalonica, was not like others, but was strange and cold with her. So she, who had been as the ashes of a fire, did glow with yearning for one like unto herself—a noble Greek without hope or joy, for whom life was a poor vanity.

And in time this man was stirred, and became her friend and lover; and they did find happiness in their converse with one another, because each, having borne the burden of too great possessions, could know the need of the other, and comfort might thus be sought in their heaviness and disenchantment.

Now Evagrius, ever seeking new distractions, went unto the

Synagogue on the first Sabbath when Paul spoke to the congregation of the Jews. And this man of vanity was mightily stirred by the presence of the saint and by his speech. Neither in Athens, Rome, Alexandria, nor in the cities of the east had he met with such doctrines, nor with such a wondrous zeal as was shown by Paul in his exhortation.

So, on each evening of the week, one silent and weary spirit did hearken unto the words of life spoken by Paul; and the thirst of this man was quenched by the marvel of the Gospel of peace.

It showed unto the subtle-minded Greek a way by which he might be redeemed from his own weariness. He determined, therefore, that he would change the manner of his whole life. He had aforesaid possessed all, and therefore possessed naught. Now would he follow in the footsteps of the Apostle, and, possessing naught, possess all.

And he went unto Theone and declared his mind to her. And she, who could not be stirred, was moved by the strange words of the young Greek, who had been like unto Solomon in his discontent and heaviness, yet now was like unto the pure flame of a candle, eagerness burning up his being.

She was jealous of the new prophet, as she called Paul. For Paul had on many evenings drawn unto him Evagrius with the power of his words; and Theone, therefore, was denied his company.

Now she was cunning in her dealings with men. And she did not deride the teachings of Paul when Evagrius declared them unto her. She hearkened readily, and only after he had spoken for an hour or more did she take up the word, saying: "Thou hast spoken of the holiness and purity of this man. Thou hast uttered strange words concerning the Kingdom of the Spirit, which Jesus, his God, will plant upon the earth.

"I learn from thee that only what thou callest the Spirit ruleth Paul; that he is a being from another nobler life; that he is not mortal, because he desireth neither beauty nor wine; because he desireth neither treasure nor soft living; because he hath surrendered all so that he may fulfil the commandments of His Master Jesus."

And Evagrius cried out eagerly: "Of a truth this man is spotless; naught will turn him from his purpose. He is possessed by this pure Holy Spirit of which I have told thee; and to him temptation is naught. He worshippeth Christ, and Christ filleth all his life."

"Lead this stranger unto me," said Theone, "and I will steal him from Christ. All men yield to me when I desire to win them from another. This Paul will be turned aside by me, and he will cast

from him that great work of which thou hast given me the measure in thy words."

And Evagrius obeyed this woman, and went unto Paul, beseeching him to speak with one who might render service unto the Church in Thessalonica if she were persuaded by his teaching.

Now Theone had perceived that the young Greek was a new man, that joy was his and heaviness had departed from him. Wherefore she was envious and wrathful. She had lost thereby a companion, and one who shared with her that woeful contempt for all things on the earth.

She desired to destroy the gladness of Evagrius and to cause him to turn to her once more.

So she was decked in glorious robes, and bracelets and rings were hung upon her by her maidens. For she desired to ravish Paul with her beauty and with the wonder of her riches.

She lay upon her couch when he entered into her chamber, and for a short space she would not stir or utter any word, though Evagrius again and yet again declared the presence of the saint.

It was Paul who at last compelled her, with sudden harsh speech, to rise up and hearken unto him. He spoke on this wise :

" I have learned from Evagrius that thou art weary of the vain show and pomp of thy easeful days. Having lived but for worldly delights, thou seekest now to learn of what is not of this carnal world, of what is of the life everlasting."

And Theone gazed upon the saint and showed him the comeliness of her countenance ; and she did speak sweet words to him, her voice lovely as the melody of viols. Yet he heeded her not. He spoke unto her as if she were one of her slaves, a creature of no account.

And he revealed unto her the precious words of Christ, the promise of salvation which would be the portion of all who truly believed.

As she hearkened to him, Theone forgot her design, forgot the loveliness of her own body. And she bowed her head, trembling before the dread speech of the stranger.

For, as Paul continued his exhortation, he spoke of the end of the world ; of the new time when Christ, the Son of God, would descend once more among His people and would rule over men and women.

Then would there be anguish and gnashing of teeth for those who believed not, who lived only to be corrupt and to sin, who gave no thought to their fellows and decked themselves in costly raiment, sharing not their treasure with another. And such persons would be cast into perdition, into the realms of night and sorrow.

And Paul lifted up his voice, rebuking this woman because of

the riches about her, because of the graven images in her house, because of her jewels and the wealth of the golden chamber wherein she lay.

And, before he ceased from speaking, she rose and, bowing herself to his feet, entreated him not to curse her, to be merciful, and to show her the truth and that pure wisdom that would guard her from the evil day.

“Sir, beseech thy God to pardon me,” she cried. “Tell Him that I will obey His teachings in all things, that I am in no way froward. Ask of Him to give me of that peace eternal which thou hast said is for the elect alone.”

And Paul laid his hand gently upon her head, saying : “ Daughter, thou hast strayed far from righteousness, and yet, because thou hast lived in ignorance of the Spirit, thy sin is not grievous, if thou dost repent, and prepare now in all humility to lead a life pure and undefiled, preparing for the speedy coming of our Master Jesus Christ.”

And Theone promised that she would change her manner of living, that she would seek to obey his words.

And, after the saint was gone from her chamber of gold, she lay there weeping and mourning for the young life of darkness and sin that was over, that could no more be summoned back than the seed that journeyeth upon the wind.

It was the presence of Paul and the light that did shine forth from his eyes that quelled this woman of folly and weariness. It was the strong joy of one whose whole being was possessed with zeal for Christ that caused the creature of vanity to mourn her vileness, to cast her jewels from her, to tear down the golden hangings of her chamber.

But it was also the fear of that hour when the Son of Man would come in His glory to judge the earth that did work upon Theone, so that she, who had made a mock of life and death, now bowed before that mystery ; and her soul melted away with fear lest Christ should come swiftly in the night-time and she should not be prepared. Thus would she be cast into the strange evil that is the portion of the wicked and those who have walked in foul ways.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FURY OF NETHAN

THE talk concerning Paul in Thessalonica was like unto a rising flood. Naught could stem its course. And Imnah and Nethan were greatly troubled in mind because of it. Jews of power and wealth such as Shamman and Azel openly declared their belief in Christ and desired to follow the Master.

After the Feast of the Passover, Imnah had dwelt for a season in Jerusalem and for a season in Antioch. He had learnt of the dispute among the saints, when certain of them had risen up against Paul because he desired that the Gentiles should not have the bonds of the law of Moses laid upon them if they became believers in Jesus Christ.

And so it came to pass that, when Nethan and Imnah had taken counsel with one another, Nethan sought out Paul and declared his mind to him.

“Thou art a man with a golden store of words; but they do serve thee falsely, because thou hast in thine ignorance been led to believe in this Jesus. Turn thee again from such beliefs; go forth as a teacher of the law of Moses among the Gentiles and I will give thee letters to the Jews in all the cities. I will give thee moneys, and thou shalt cause both Romans and Greeks to worship before the ever-burning lamp. For it is my design, and the design of many of the Pharisees, that we shall, as fishermen, cast out our nets and draw within them our Governors.

“These Romans have no faith. They have turned from their false gods, and wander blindly in dark ways, seeking the truth. Cast thy belief in Christ from thee, and verily I will make of thee a great teacher, who shall be a power among the heathens.

“I know many of the men in authority at Rome. Thou wilt surely persuade them if thou bearest letters from me unto them. But first shalt thou tear the folly of Jesus the Nazarene from thy heart.”

And Paul was greatly angered, and rose up, calling Nethan a tempter, bidding him begone from the house; bidding him, when his heat was overpast, to search the Scriptures, so that he might learn that Jesus was the Messiah, as had been foretold.

And Nethan went unto his own place, and his soul was as the furnace of a smith. There did glow within it a hatred that naught could quench, that so possessed him the desire to be avenged upon Paul became the one purpose of his being.

He perceived that his dream that all should come to believe in the law of Moses, and should look upon the Temple at Jerusalem as the home of their God, might be harmed or come to naught if such teachers as Paul preached Christ unto the Gentiles.

And the fears of Nethan were fulfilled in this matter when he hearkened unto the words of Paul on the third Sabbath at the Synagogue.¹

For the Apostle lifted up his voice, saying: "Many Gentiles have come unto me and have desired to know whether they too might not share with you the faith in Christ my Master. And I have welcomed them, telling them that there is no difference between Jew or Greek, between Jew or Roman. If the Gentiles believe, and will walk in the light according to the teaching of Jesus, they shall, through their faith, be saved. The yoke of the law shall not be set upon them if they are not prepared to bear it."

Then did some of the Pharisees cry out against Paul, but he silenced them with the eloquence of his pleading for all those souls who were in darkness, who must be easily led, tended with gentleness.

If they believed in the one God and in His Son, then would they so order their ways the observances of the law would not be required of them.

And Paul, with glorious words, did vision for those who hearkened the wonders that awaited the children of God. And he showed them how the Romans might all believe if they were won through faith; but they could no more be won through the works of the law than the Ægean Sea could be raised up from its bed and set in the midst of Egypt.

"Our fathers," declared Paul, "were not able to fulfil all the works of the law. How, then, can men, whose fathers have not for generations studied these practices and observed them, be able to bear this burden? If they believe in the Messiah, it is not needful that it should be borne by them."

Now Paul had been overbold in his speech, and he caused certain of the Jews to waver and fall away. And these did gather about Nethan, and consulted with him concerning what they deemed was a heresy in the doctrine of this preacher.

And Nethan worked upon their minds as the potter upon soft clay, so shaping them that their respect for Paul turned to hatred;

¹ "Paul and Silas spoke in the Synagogue on three Sabbaths only, but they abode for a full season of the year in Thessalonica, preaching unto the Hellenes and unto the Jews in the market-place. They were but for a short space in Philippi, whereas in Thessalonica the moon travelled many times across the sky, many times through its quarters, before they fled from the town."

and soon were they prepared to aid Nethan in his designs against the strangers.

They went unto the Rulers of the Synagogue and persuaded them to forbid Paul the right of entry therein. And he was told that the doctrine he taught was false, and that never again would he be permitted to lift up his voice in the assembly of the Jews at Thessalonica.

Tidings of the exhortation delivered by the saint on the third Sabbath were spread abroad among the Gentiles. And when Paul spoke in the market-place he was acclaimed by the people of repute. These rejoiced because they need not, through rites and observances, win favour with the Lord. In truth the yoke of Christ is easy for those who desire to be freed from the beast and to live according to the Spirit.

Azel and Shamman, who were rich merchants, asked that Paul and Silas should abide in their house and work no more at their trade, devoting their lives to teaching and preaching.

But neither Paul nor Silas would dwell therein or be a burden to these men. For they knew that only from certain of the elect could they thus receive care and lodgment.

Azel and Shamman were as the plants that spring up in a night. They had not been tested and tried. And so Paul and Silas laboured all the day and in the hours of darkness, taking little rest. For when they worked not for bread they worked for the souls of the people. And daily the congregation of the Brethren increased, and there were many more Greeks than Jews who came to believe and were baptised.

And those God-fearing Gentiles who attended the Synagogue went no more to it, and would not give offerings to the Priest, inasmuch as they departed from the fold of Judæa and were lost to the Synagogue.

Then were the Rulers and Nethan and Imnah mightily provoked. They were proud of the proselytes won by them in past times, and they were consumed with a jealous wrath, so that they imagined wicked devices whereby they might cause hurt to come to Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

For now Timothy was of their company, the bearer of gifts from Lydia and the Brethren in Philippi. These Paul received gladly, for they were a testimony of the deep love and charity of these faithful brothers and sisters in Christ.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HEALING OF DAVID : REACTION AGAINST PAUL

Now I would write of the shameful change in the hearts of the rich Jews of Thessalonica.

Many of the Greeks of that town came to believe in Christ because of the words of promise concerning the Kingdom of our Father in the world to come.

And among those who were baptised were some who went hungry and suffered from the need of those days. So, when the Church was shaped and the Elders were chosen, Paul spoke unto them, declaring the Master's will.

"Men and Brethren, it was the rule, as given unto us by the Twelve Apostles, that we should all be counted as members of one body. And though we may not share all things in common, as was Christ's will, yet may those who have treasure give such share of their possessions to the congregation no member of it shall hunger or fail through hardship.

"Thou dost not wound thy hand or smite thy feet; thou cherishest all thy members. Wherefore we should cherish all the children of our God."

Now Nethan and Imnah rejoiced when this teaching of Paul's was borne unto them. For in their tribe there was much money greed; and they sought out Shamman and Azel and recited unto them a tale concerning the saints.

"These men seek your gold, not for the people, but for themselves; they are beggars, who through false teaching and with many promises seek to muffle the understanding, to cast about your yearnings the garment of a false dream. Then, when they have gathered your treasure, they will depart in the night-time and see your faces no more."

Now Shamman and Azel had bidden Paul and Silas to their dwelling, and had desired to do them honour, not because of the truths they taught, but because they desired to make a show of them to the people, and because certain noble Greeks held their teaching in high esteem.

On learning of their doctrine concerning the sharing of possessions, these rich Jews had been saddened, and they were now greatly distressed in mind when they learned from the lips of the enemies of the saints that a snare had been set for them, and these men were but seekers after their gold. So they withdrew from the

congregation and they hearkened no more to the words of life.

Howbeit, Paul continued to win the favour of the Greeks. And he could not walk abroad in peace, so many would follow him and entreat him to speak of Christ and the coming of His Kingdom, when all evil and sorrow would pass away.

At Thessalonica, in the first season of the year, there were many more Greeks than Jews who were baptised and who came together to worship. Now among them was a woman named Amena, a widow who had one young son, the light of her age and a joy to all who beheld him.

This youth, David, fell from the tower of his master's dwelling and lay as one dead upon the stones. Then did the mother make great crying, and she sought in her sorrow to slay herself when the boy was borne to her own place upon a bier, and he was set out for his home in the earth.

And it came to pass that Paul, returning from his labours at sunset, walked hard by the dwelling of the widow. And he asked of one who watched by the door why this lamentation came forth from it.

The one who watched was a believer, and he said unto Paul, "Master, thou hast told us that Jesus is the Lord of time and sleep and death. There lieth within this dwelling a youth who fell from a high place, and he is dead, and behold, his mother is crazed with the grief that possesseth her. Let ye come into this house of mourning and let this woman find favour in your sight. Mayhap ye will entreat the Lord of death that he yield up to the stricken mother the spirit of this youth."

And Paul made no answer, but he entered the chamber of the dead, and he and Silas set themselves about the bier, praying softly to the Saviour for the soul of this child.

And behold, the mother ceased from her long crying. And, though the people pressed within, they uttered no sound, watching the two saints who knelt beside the bier in the gathering night.

Strangely sudden was the labour of Paul for this boy. He did rise up and pass his hands across his brow, whispering certain strange words in his ear and breathing in his nostrils.

Then did the body stir, and there came from the lips of the dead the sigh of a sleeping soul. And again Paul passed his hands above the boy and called him by his name.

It roused him, so that he rose up; and, gazing upon his mother, he asked her wherefore she wept and why these strangers were all about him.

Then the people cried out : " The Lord of death hath given thee back thy son through this holy man, and he is himself mayhap a god."

The woman cast herself at the feet of the saint and strove to worship him. But he admonished her, raising her up and telling her that her son was whole through the mercy of Jesus Christ, and Him only should she worship and serve.

Now the tale of this marvel spread abroad among the people. Through it many more were added unto the Church. And Paul was glad at heart ; his sickness went from him. For a space he was neither tormented in the flesh nor in the spirit.

And the people of Thessalonica were his joy—the crown to all his labours, as he declared.

But evil worked in the darkness. And, now that Shamman and Azel were turned against Paul, Nethan and Imnah were strengthened in their purpose, which was to cause the death of the Apostle and those Brethren who were with them.

And these crafty ones took counsel with one another concerning the snare they would set for the strangers. They feared to have them slain by any of the hired men who at times will work such deeds of darkness.

They perceived, also, that now that there were many Greeks who believed in Christ, it would not serve them to slay their leaders. Wherefore they imagined an evil device. They summoned to their presence certain of the youths of the town, and declared unto these that Paul and Silas desired to overthrow the rule of the Emperor, and to set up in his place one named Jesus, and that this Jesus, whom they would crown King of Thessalonica, of Philippi, and of all Macedonia, was hidden in the house of Jason, the merchant.

At the appointed hour he would be led forth, and the Christians would hail him as Lord and Master and overthrow authority in the town, seizing the reins of government.

And these cunning Jews declared that they dared not speak of this conspiracy to the politarchs ; for they were inclined to favour the stranger and to be deceived by his words.

So Nethan offered the youths gold if they would go forth and make an outcry and an assault upon the dwellings of those who believed in Christ. Thus would the commonweal be preserved ; and, because of the treason that would be revealed, the Rulers would not dare to punish those who had done violence so that they might save the city from the rule of this man Jesus.

And the youths believed the words of the Jews. And it was determined, when they had partaken of a feast of food and wine

that would stir them up to wrath, that they would go forth stealthily, and first seek out the house of Jason, so that they might seize upon Paul and Silas and their king Jesus, who, Nethan declared, was hidden in his house.

David, the boy who had been healed by Paul, served these young men with food and wine. And, when he learned from their talk of their design, he hastened from the table. And, passing from the house of his master, he sought out Jason and warned him of the evil that would shortly come upon him.

Then were Paul and Silas led secretly to the house of another saint, and they were prisoned in a chamber 'neath the earth. And lo! as the door did close upon them, there came the sound of turmoil from the street without.

Many voices cried. And they did utter together words concerning the treason that was plotted against the Emperor, which had been set in their mouths by Imnah and Nethan.

"Where are these traitors?" they cried. "Let us find them, seize them, and cast them to the moles and bats; let us slay them and give their bodies to the dogs. They seek to overthrow the rule of the Emperor; they seek to bring ruin and hunger and hardship upon our town."

The young men entered the dwelling of Jason and seized upon him and upon his children. And these they buffeted and bruised, dragging them through the streets, spitting upon them, causing them to be a derision in the eyes of the people.

And they entered into the houses of certain of the Greeks and Jews who had declared their belief in Jesus. These they haled forth, calling them traitors and casting them upon the ground, so that certain among them perished in the press on that woeful eve.

These young men, being crazed with wine and wrath, seized the moneys and goods and other possessions of the saints. And some of them they burned, and others, such as the moneys, they preserved as the wage for their evil work.

Then they hastened to the market-place, where they were challenged by the captain of the guard. And when he learned from their leader that they had seized the King of the Christians, one Jesus, he believed them, and bade them lead this man before the politarchs so that he might be judged for his treason to the Emperor.

The press of the people was great. And in that hour of stir it was hard to read the faces of the prisoners, so that the guard could not perceive the stranger who was called Jesus, but they believed that he was being led captive by the young men.

And behold, when the Rulers came forth and desired to know the

cause of the tumult, the press of the people fell away ; many among them scattered. Then their leaders perceived that their prisoners were all men of the town, that there was no stranger among them, and so they remained silent when the chief among the politarchs said unto them :

“ Ye speak of one Jesus, who maketh a conspiracy against the Emperor, and of Paul and Silas, his followers ? Where are these men, so that I may question them and learn of the tumult which ye declare hath been roused by them ? ”

And for a short space no man could make any answer. But Nethan, who had not been at first among them, now came forward, declaring his accusation with great boldness.

“ This Jesus,” he said unto the Ruler, “ hath been declared King of the whole earth by His servants, Paul and Silas. And they led Him stealthily to the house of Jason by night. It was their purpose that they should suddenly declare Him Ruler of Thessalonica.”

CHAPTER XXIV

DAVID SLAIN IN RESCUING PAUL FROM THE JEWS AT THESSALONICA

Now, when Nethan spoke of Jesus on this wise, one of the politarchs held up his hand, demanding silence.

He had hearkened unto the teaching of Paul, and he had believed that Paul spoke of a God who might govern what was known as the sect of the Stoics. And, as he was well inclined to their doctrine, he was ill pleased when this man spoke of Jesus as a conspirator who was in their midst, and might cause the people to rise up in revolt against the Emperor.

And he said unto Nethan : “ Paul has assured us that Jesus was the Son of God and that He was slain by the people of your race.”

Now Nethan denied this, boldly saying that it was a false tale. “ ‘ Forasmuch as Jesus,’ Paul hath declared, ‘ rose from the dead on the third day and walked amongst men once more.’ And now, if ye will send the guard to search the town, ye will come upon Paul and this Jesus who hath been designed by the stranger as the Ruler of Thessalonica.

“ From city to city have these men gone, seeking ever to win followers for their King Jesus ; and always do the people turn against them and cast them forth from their towns. Tumult

ariseth because they question the rule of the Emperor and because they declare that Jesus will come amongst us and rule over all the earth."

And, when Nethan had ceased from speaking, the Jews made a great clamour, demanding that the strangers, who were traitors, should be seized and cast into prison because they sought to overturn the rule of the Emperor.

And, though Evagrius rose up among them, and contended that Paul and Silas were but teachers who sought to lay upon the people a new rule of life, and newer and nobler ordinances, they would not hearken unto him or disperse quietly.

And with each moment, as the tumult increased, the politarchs became the more afraid, so that at the last, to silence the people and to save their own name from the breath of treason, they gave orders that search should be made by the guard throughout the town for the strangers.

And it was decreed that the people should go in due order and peaceably to their homes.

But they were like unto men filled with the burning fever of the marshes. Naught would gainsay them or hinder them in their purpose. They set upon those who were held to be believers in Christ, and some of them were cast forth from their dwellings and scourged. Others they threatened with death if they would not declare that Paul and Silas and their Master Jesus were traitors who conspired against the commonweal.

Now I have told ye that the two saints were hidden in a chamber beneath the earth, and the sound of the turmoil came unto them but as the sound of the distant tide upon the shore.

And they knelt together, keeping the Hour of the Watch, praying for the souls of all the faithful in Thessalonica.

Paul was in great anguish of spirit, because he feared that his children, as he called them, would suffer much tribulation at the hands of the ungodly. But as he prayed a stillness fell upon him, and, casting forth his Body of Light, he lay as one in a traveller's sleep, while Silas watched beside him.

And Silas, who was awake, saw naught, yet knew he that great presences were in that chamber, and it was holy in that hour.

Paul, as he lay between the visible and the Invisible, perceived white, shadowy hands and pale robes and the faces of certain of the saints who had fallen asleep in Christ Jesus. And they said no word to him, yet they smiled and passed away from his vision with such untroubled mien, the everlasting peace fell upon the soul of the watcher.

And, even as he was loosed from his swoon, he heard the words :
" I will shelter thee in the covert of My wings."

There came a knocking at the door. And David, the youth who had preserved their lives, entered from without. He declared unto them that there was a great outcry, that bands of evil men went to and fro seeking the saints so that they might slay them. The Rulers were afraid to hinder these unruly youths, for they declared that they sought Paul in the name of Cæsar and for the good of the whole people.

Now the chamber in which the Brethren were hidden was known to certain among the Elders of the Jews. And so it was held by the faithful that it would assuredly be searched when the tumult had abated and when the Jews considered in all calmness of mind how they might lay hands upon Paul.

Wherefore David led them forth from this secret place, and three of the Brethren watched in the street without. These did cast about Paul and Silas the dark cloaks of merchants, and they led them by narrow paths from out the midst of the town towards the sea.

Howbeit, Nethan and Imnah were crafty in all their devices, and they had set in certain places watchers, who did cause to halt those who passed that way.

And three or four of these servants of the Jews compelled the saints to halt, and demanded of them their business, commanding them to show their faces in the light of the torches. For a coverlet of mist had dimmed the stars, and darkness hung thickly about them.

Then Paul spoke out boldly, saying that they were Roman citizens and had journeyed in haste to Philippi, and he bade these men fall back before him.

Now, when Paul chose to command the common people they were ever quelled by his manner, and would, if they were not stirred up against him, perceive in him one who was noble and had the right to order their ways.

So, like foolish, noisy dogs, these servants of the Elders fell back before the saints. And Paul and the Brethren mounted the steps that were before them, and they did reach the open land above before a cry sounded up to them warning them of their peril.

For one of the Jews had said unto a comrade : " There goeth Paul the preacher, and another who followeth after Jesus is of his company."

And, when the servants of Nethan learned that they had let Paul pass, they hastened after the saints. And lo! they were met in the narrow way where the steps did climb the hillside by the youth

David, who had feared these men and had therefore tarried behind the saints.

He perceived that they had drawn their knives, and he knew that they had divined that Paul had passed them by.

So he cried out the words of warning, and he drew his weapon from beneath his cloak, challenging these men. And they bade him begone, else they would slay him. But, though he had not yet reached manhood, he faced them, bravely joining battle with them, making a great outcry.

And for a short space he held them with his clamour and fierce looks. Then, perceiving that he was but a boy, they fell upon him and slew him.

Thus David, whose life had been saved by Paul, yielded up his life joyfully for the saint, and was it of great worth. For the saints, hearing his cry, hastened forward, gaining the road that had been builded by the Romans. And there they came upon horses, which had been led to this place, so that they might hasten away towards Berea once they were without the town.

And through the darkness of that night they travelled swiftly. Soon were they far from their pursuers, and once more seeking a strange city where they might spread the tidings of our Master Christ.

Now, I would have ye know that it was ordained that Paul should be cast out of many cities, that he should be like unto a spear that would prick the hearts of all the people; so that some would be stirred up and exalted by the stroke of this weapon; so that others—the unworthy Jews—should be so pricked by his teaching, and by the sharpness of his preaching, that they would turn against him and cast him forth from their town.

Thus the tidings of the Gospel would spread throughout many lands; and always would it come through persecution. In Thessalonica it was Paul the Jews hated, for he sought not, as Silas, to win them with soft speech. At times his words were hard and bitter, and he would spare no man.

So that many would be angered, and would hold that he was too arrogant of speech and of mien, setting himself above the most learned in the town. Yet Paul spoke at times as if he were the humblest among the Brethren. And many believed that truly he was an evil and secret sinner because he did oft declare unto them that he was the lowest among men, and not worthy to bear the Word of Christ unto the heathen.

CHAPTER XXV

EVAGRIUS, JASON, AND AZIZA BEFORE THE POLITARCHAI

I WOULD give unto ye the tale of the Brethren's affliction at Thessalonica. On that night of violence many were ill-treated and many were scourged, the goods in their dwellings seized by the youths who served Imnah and Nethan. And Evagrius, who was rich and had power among the people, soon divined the cause of this assault upon the saints.

So he summoned his own slaves, the slaves of Theone, and certain other Greeks who had hearkened to the teaching of Paul and were well inclined towards the saints.

He told these men of the snare that had been set for all who believed in Christ, and he bade them follow him and aid him to defend the Brethren.

Jason, who had fled from his tormentors, gathered the faithful among the Jews about him. And they did arm themselves with stones and clubs, meeting the bands of youths with these rude weapons. And they were of service, a flight of stones casting many of these robbers to the ground.

Howbeit, the guard, who came upon the fighters, could not divide the sheep from the goats, the evil from the good. They seized Jason and Aziza, who defended their dwellings, and they even laid hands upon Evagrius because he continued to pursue the workers of evil, smiting them when the others had drawn away before the guards.

Now Nethan was cunning in all his contrivances, and he had sought out the guard, leading them to the place where the faithful strove but to hold their families and their homes in security from the invader.

And he gave gold unto the guard, and did set words of wickedness into their mouths, so that they accused Evagrius, Jason, and Aziza when they were led before the politarchai.

Speaking according to the bidding of the Jew, the Captain declared that Jesus had fled in the darkness from the city. And in His company was His servant Paul, who was to command the army of the Christians who would rise up and overthrow authority, causing Jesus to be their Ruler and Governor.

The first among the politarchai was hooped in his back and nigh in age to the eagle. And he had gathered much wisdom through the long years of his life. So he perceived that no true tale was

uttered ; and he knew—not through knowledge, but through understanding—that lies were being told him ; yet it was hard for him to overcome the lie.

And he said unto the Captain, “ Thou bearest unto me false measure. I am assured that Jesus was no living man. He was the god of these strangers as Zeus is your god. It is not contrary to the law that the people should worship gods. Let them but render due homage to the Emperor and they may seek to shape their manner of life and belief according to their understanding.”

Then Imnah came forward and declared his accusation : “ These people have not rendered homage to the Emperor. For they have uttered words of treason concerning him. They speak of the Kingdom of Jesus, which, they declare, will engirdle the whole earth ; they go among the people, promising them ease and joy if they will serve Jesus, who is to reign over this kingdom, who will fling the Emperor from his throne, casting him into darkness.

“ Much harm has been caused by this Paul, who has poisoned the minds of many with his evil words. He is fled from Thessalonica. Is there not in his flight sure proof of his guilt ? Is there not in this night of blood and tumult a further showing of his design to capture the city for his Lord ? ”

The Magistrate contended vainly with Imnah. And he was, despite his wisdom and his years, overcome by the subtle-tongued Jew.

The politarchai became fearful. They held counsel with one another. They declared that if they pardoned the stranger the tidings of it would be borne to other towns, mayhap to Rome. And they would be accused of treason.

So they determined that they would send the guard after Paul and his Brethren, and that when they came upon them they should bear them for trial to Thessalonica. Thus would no stain rest upon the names of the Rulers of the town.

When the old man perceived that he could not prevail with those Rulers, when he perceived also that he could not escape from the snare set by the Jew if he defended Paul, he bade the politarchai consider the tumult that might arise if these strangers were led captive to the city.

“ Let them be sentenced to banishment. Let them not be permitted to enter our town again.”

And, when this edict was given forth, there arose a great clamour, and the Jews demanded that Evagrius, Aziza, and Jason should be punished for treason, which had assuredly been committed by them.

Now Evagrius was not one who sought to speak in discourses.

He scorned the common people in the days of his youth, and he held that those who contended with them in long speeches did soil their whole being and became unclean of soul.

Howbeit, since he had hearkened unto Paul, there had arisen within him strange yearnings which his mind could not rule over ; and these now caused him to demand that all men should be silent and should give ear unto him.

In the days when he was a heathen, so possessed with pride was he, he would have remained silent before those who were to him no better than the mire of the streets. And, because he was honoured in Thessalonica, the multitude held their peace when he spoke unto them.

“ I can show you, fools and babblers, that ye are but seekers after folly and after lies. What is truth? It is what the common people of this earth deny. What is goodness? It is what the rabble will not practise. What is virtue, and what is understanding? They are the rare adornments of the elect alone. For behold, the common people of this land are no more than the plants that grow. They have no knowledge ; they seek the light but for their own ease and betterment.

“ Wherefore, ye men of Thessalonica, or those of you who are as the roots of the field, ye cannot discern what is false or true. Ye cannot measure in any manner the weight of the words that are uttered in your presence. Paul and Silas are wise men, gifted with the treasures of discernment. They have gathered the fruits of knowledge and have spread them out before you. They have declared unto you the words of Jesus their Master, who was the source of knowledge.

“ They have said His Kingdom is not of Macedonia, neither is it of Rome or Judæa or Egypt. His Kingdom is of a nobler earth than ours ; His empire is beyond the sun, beyond the stars. And there doth He reign, and there will He receive those who can apprehend His sayings, those who are not as the roots of the field, without minds, utterers of empty words, no better than the dust from which they came.

“ Jesus, the Lord of life beyond the tomb, seeketh not to rule over this land nor any kingdom of the earth. He yielded up His body to the scoffer and the fool, permitting them to torment it because they were as ye are : so without understanding He would not humiliate Himself by contending with them. And, that He might show that they could not overcome Him, he caused His body, pitted with the holes made by nails and turned into the semblance of death, to rise up and walk among them once more.

“ Jesus, as Paul hath declared, will in His own time come once more among you, not to conquer the earth, but to gather unto Himself the elect—those who have understanding and are found worthy to live in His Kingdom, which is beyond the sun, beyond the stars.

“ So now I ask of those who deny my words to lift up their voice and accuse me of treason, and thus shall they show themselves to be witless as the roots that live in the darkness of the ground.”

And no man durst speak when Evagrius made an end with these words of scorn. For they would not be counted among the fools and babblers. And this noble Greek, having been ever a man of silence, was respected now as Solomon for his judgment.

The Jews would have disputed with him if they had not perceived the change in the countenance of the people; so they held their peace.

And the politarchai, having whispered together, declared their will.

“ Jason, Evagrius, and Aziza shall be seized and their possessions taken from them if Paul cometh again to Thessalonica. We cannot read aright the parable of Jesus. But Paul has mightily provoked the people with his sayings. And so he shall not cause disorder with his presence in this city of ours.

“ And we do hold that, though treason hath not been committed by Jason, Evagrius, and Aziza, yet they have been led, through ignorance, into foolish ways by these strangers, and so shall they give security that the cause of tumult shall not rise up amongst us again.”

Then the people gave a great shout of joy, and both Jews and Hellenes returned peacefully to their homes.

Now the politarchai had, according to their vision, been wise and circumspect. They had rebuked Evagrius for the pride of his speech, and they had bound him in such a manner that he would, because of his wealth, seek to hinder Paul from returning once more to Thessalonica.

And, when he had considered the matter, Evagrius was put out of heart. And Jason, who had hearkened diligently to the words of the saints, caused him to be the more cast down; for he rebuked him for declaring that Jesus was one who turned from the common people, who scorned all but the elect. And high words passed between these two, who might have together gathered the faithful within the fold.

Let ye read from this that in times of temptation, when Satan walketh abroad, ye shall in no way permit him to cause those who

are upright to contend with one another and thus to become a derision in the sight of evil men.

In his weariness of spirit Evagrius sought out Theone and declared his bitter thoughts to her. But she, too, had been galled by the sharp devices of Nethan and Imnah. For they had spoken evil concerning her to her husband; and he had admonished her, saying that she had given his gold unto men who plotted against the Emperor, who sought to overturn his rule, who desired to overthrow those in authority, the governors of the people.

And he declared that he would expel her from his house and accuse her of treason, causing her to be a shame among her kin, if she sought out these followers of Jesus and made known to all that she was one of them.

Now this old man had permitted Theone to live evilly, to commit all manner of sin, and, only when she turned to Christ and sought to live virtuously, did he thus wrathfully condemn her and give commandment to his slaves to watch her in her goings out and comings in. And so Nethan and Imnah prevailed, as evil will prevail for a time.

The noble Greeks in Thessalonica had been well inclined towards the teaching of Paul and Silas, not only because of the wonder of their words, but also because Theone, who had ruled them through her loveliness and her pride, was an eager pleader for the strangers and their Gospel of truth.

Now that Theone's lips were closed, and now that the common people, through the cunning of the Jews, had caused scandal to gather about Paul, so that his name became a thing of disrepute, they turned their faces against the new doctrine, and many among them fell away from the Church.

And thus were the faithful winnowed for the Lord, thus were the tares cast out from among the wheat. But, as is the way of life, blades of wheat that might have grown and ripened were plucked up also and cast away.

Howbeit, Jason and Aziza gathered about them privily many who were in doubt. And they spoke with such earnestness, some of these Greeks and Jews declared they would not fall away, but would secretly meet and worship together Jesus, the Son of God, who had given His life for them.

CHAPTER XXVI

TIMOTHY DISSUADES PAUL FROM TURNING BACK TO THESSALONICA

PAUL, Silas, and Timothy hastened through the night towards Berea. And, when the darkness was thinning, Paul groaned and cried out, "I can go no farther. My children, who look to me in all things, are behind me in Thessalonica, and there is no one among them to guide them and aid them in this hard time.

"I am failing them, yea, I am treacherous, betraying my Master in thus fleeing from His people, who will need me sorely in the coming days."

And, so powerful was the word of Paul, the Brethren turned back upon the road with him, though they had learned from the Thessalonians who were with them that a sure death awaited them if they entered the town while the people were wrathful and while tumult prevailed.

Howbeit, Timothy was one who had a great understanding of his master Paul, and it was his custom in no manner to hinder the saint when first he planned some act that was perilous or foolish. Timothy would let him go a little way with it, and then would he in all quietness show the dark side of the undertaking to the Apostle.

So, as they journeyed, he spoke of the harm that Paul would bring upon the faithful in Thessalonica. He declared that many more might be slain, and that then belief would perish from the hearts of those who remained.

"The bloom of faith in Thessalonica is tender and fine," were his words, "thou wilt cause it to wither away if thou art taken in this town by our enemies, who are many and powerful."

And Paul groaned in the spirit, for he knew that Timothy was wise in his reasoning, and that he must needs turn his back upon the unfinished work.

"I may plough up the ground in each city, yet I am never permitted to watch the seed in its growth and in the beauty of its ripeness," he cried out bitterly. And then he turned him about once more, away from the sea and from those strangers whom he had come to love.

Paul shed tears in the dimness of the night as they travelled onwards. Howbeit, man changeth as the days change. And when the saints perceived Berea, peaceful and untroubled in the virgin air of dawn, sorrow fled away from them and they were glad once more.

Meliah, a kinsman of Jason, welcomed them joyfully, offering unto them the shelter of his dwelling and all that was therein. For he was a follower of Christ, a zealous and faithful believer.

So it came to pass that, when Paul had prayed for an hour alone, he rose up, declaring that all was well, and that he rejoiced in the will of the Lord, who had permitted the Jews to cast him out from one town so that he might preach the word of truth in yet another.

CHAPTER XXVII

EVAGRIUS MOCKS DEMAS' IDEA OF HOW TO SERVE CHRIST: PAUL SOJOURNS IN BEREА.

THEONE bade Evagrius to her dwelling. And she spoke with him earnestly concerning Paul and Silas. She desired that he should follow after them, bearing letters to certain noble women in Berea, telling them of the Seer of Tarsus, and of certain wondrous knowledge that was his concerning a revelation of God, the Unknowable, who now was to be known through His servant Paul.

Even as Theone spoke of these letters, and of the need for secrecy because of her husband's wrath, a youth named Demas entered the chamber; he was wild in his looks, his raiment all in disorder.

And he cried out eagerly: "I have learned, Theone, that thou believest also in Jesus, that thou art one of those who have hearkened unto Paul. Now I would have your counsel concerning him. This day my father was told by a Jew that I was a follower of the stranger, and my father rebuked me. And he declared that he would not give unto me my rightful heritage if I continued to believe in Jesus.

"And I made answer that I could not obey him, that naught would turn me from my faith in Christ. So my father hath driven me forth from his house and hath bidden me return only when this madness, as he called it, was gone from me."

Then Theone declared her envy of Evagrius and Demas, because they were men and could follow the saints, sharing their poverty, their tribulations, serving them according to their needs.

And Evagrius made answer that he would not be a fool like Demas, that he would not surrender all his possessions and follow the saints in their journeyings.

Then did Theone utter many words of scorn, deriding Evagrius and praising Demas. And she gave her letters to the youth, and he promised that he would deliver them to the women of Berea.

Howbeit, Evagrius spoke on this wise : " I am one who can work for Christ in my own time and in my own manner. Each limb of the body hath its appointed labour ; the hand may not serve the body as the eye serveth it. If I become a beggar I am naught. Here in this city, while I have my share of possessions, I am respected. Here I have a name that is held in honour. So with many my word is of weight.

" I would ill serve my Master Jesus if I sought to serve Paul and Silas, for it hath ever been my part to command. I should be but as the rotten branch that falleth from the tree if I thus cast myself away.

" Wherefore I shall live according to the state of my fathers in this town, and I shall seek among the people those who have understanding, and I will win them for Christ.

" He will be the better served by me if I thus labour according to the measure of my strength. And let Demas, if he be wise, bide in his father's house. Yield, and yet do not yield to him. Win him by persuasion, and thus thou wilt be able to render a greater service to Christ than if thou art led by thy folly to seek a life of hardship.

" Each man hath his appointed burden. Let him not take up what is too heavy to bear, else will he fall by the way."

And Demas cried out : " Thou art as a caged bird caught by bars of gold. I cannot be bound as thou art bound. Before Paul was known to me he was known to my dreams. I had understanding of this great master when first my eyes beheld him. It was as if he had been with me all the days of my youth, one invisible for whom I watched, one unseen yet the desire of all my soul.

" And so, when I hearkened unto Paul, he was no stranger to me, he was the master, the king of my dreams, for whom I had waited many seasons.

" I will seek out Paul and Silas, and I will be the bondman of Paul. I shall wash his feet when he is weary, anoint his head and tend him in sickness.

" I shall labour for him with my hands, so that he shall be free for the work of preaching the Word of Christ. All the years of my life shall be surrendered unto Him, and I shall not at any time look back. Gladly shall I give up all for Paul."

And Evagrius mocked at the youth, telling him that his soul had not, and could not, grow wings. Wherefore he would, like a clipped bird, fall to the ground, and mayhap perish.

But the youth heeded him not. And, when he had come to Berea, he delivered the letters of Theone, and then he sought out Paul and prayed that he might be of his company.

And, so earnest was the young man, Paul received him, and

promised so to instruct him he might in time preach the Word and speak with his own race concerning the works of Christ.

There were devout Jews in Berea who had not for many years gone up to Jerusalem, who were eager for knowledge, and believed that the time was ripe, that the hour when God would manifest Himself was at hand.

They were amazed to learn that the Son of the Most High had been born of a woman and had lived among men in Judæa. And they feared lest it were some false tale. So they studied the Scriptures, so that the word of Paul and the word of the Prophets might be compared the one with the other.

Some of these Jews were learned, yet they could not find aught that was foolish or false in the teaching of Paul. And soon all were agreed that Jesus was the Messiah, as had been foretold.

Paul spoke much with the women, who were Greeks and had been instructed in the wisdom of the wise men of Athens. Yet they had not been satisfied, and now were they glad, because they perceived that the wisdom of the wise men was but a poor thing when the Words of Life were imparted unto them.

And these women besought Paul to remain in their town and to journey no more, but to be their shepherd, their teacher.

He was perplexed in mind, and still he yearned to return unto Thessalonica. It was a great town, and fair had been its promise for the Church. But word was borne to Paul that Jason and the Brethren would suffer grievously if he appeared again in that city.

So he promised the Greeks that he would bide for a season in Berea. And it was his design that if good tidings were borne unto him from Philippi he would return once more to it. For he was full sure that his vision at Troas of the need of Macedonia was not yet fulfilled.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SUCCESSFUL DECEPTION OF EULIA CONFOUNDS NETHAN'S SCHEMES : HE TRIES TO CONTRIVE PAUL'S MURDER

HOWSOEVER, Nethan rested not. He learned that Paul was preaching Christ in Berea, and so his mind was filled once more with mischievous imaginations.

He sought out the politarchai, and he told them that Paul would stir up the people of Berea, and that he would cause them to rise, and mayhap to contend with the people of Thessalonica.

Paul had been banished from Philippi, and was held to be a man of evil repute by the Magistrates of that town. In the cities of Galatia he had caused the people to make a turmoil. He was in truth a sore danger to the commonweal.

And the politarchai sent a warning unto those in authority in Berea.

Fearing they might not heed what was written, Nethan went himself to that town and sought an audience with the Rulers.

He had learned from certain of the Jews that many of the people believed in the teaching of the strangers, and would not be easily turned from their faith in the one God and the Messiah.

So he was careful with his words, speaking smoothly, uttering no evil concerning Silas and Timothy. For it was his purpose to divide the three saints, to cause Paul to be cast into prison or to be driven forth from that country. Then he believed he could mould the minds of Silas and Timothy, causing them no more to believe in Jesus the Nazarene.

He would offer them gold, and promise them work and a place of authority in the Synagogue. And he believed that these men could not resist such bribes, for they were poor in their attire, and they laboured sorely so that they might eat hyssop and bread. It was the saying of Nethan: "Ye may sway the heart of man with love, but ye shall sway their minds with gold."

Now in Berea there was a certain Greek whose word commanded the respect of those in authority. He was a Magistrate, and possessed much land, many slaves, and a wife named Eulia, who was fair to look upon, who had also power and possessions.

She was a woman of learning, and she sat at the feet of the saints, hearkening to their discourses and treasuring their words in her heart. So she was mightily displeased when her husband recounted unto her the evil tale of Paul as it had been related unto him by Nethan.

And she declared that the Jew was a liar and a deceiver, that his words were as false moneys, that Paul was the great Seer of Tarsus who would kindle the lamp of God, causing it to shine forth over all the earth.

Howbeit, her husband Euxine would not be constrained by her. He told her that the Jew had a good name as a merchant, so must his tale be true. And he led Nethan to his dwelling and bade him recount his chronicle again.

And, when he had ended, Eulia summoned her slaves and bade them remove Nethan from her presence, for he was loathsome as the creeping darkness in her sight.

Her husband was greatly angered, and promised Nethan that he would tell the Rulers this tale concerning Paul, and he would be flung forth as the lice that are foul and destroy what is comely.

But Eulia was a woman who could contrive strategies; and she knew the soul of man was as a tapestry, into which could be woven many figures and devices if the woman were a cunning worker.

So she put on costly apparel, and a feast was set out in her garden for her husband. And, when he came in wearied after the heat of the day, she spoke soft words to him concerning his labours for the commonweal; and she marvelled at the work he had wrought for the people. Truly they were safe from adversity and from the plague of the lean years while he was in authority.

And she set a garland upon his head, chanting to him, causing him to drink much wine. Then she told him that the slave had recited unto her sayings that were vile, that had been uttered by Nethan about Euxine. And he had mocked at her husband, laughing at him for his foolishness.

And the slave at the bidding of Eulia, repeated the words that had been put into his mouth, words that had not been uttered by the Jew.

Then was Euxine roused to wrath and was prepared to hearken unto his wife. And she did show him that the Jew was a jealous man, who hated Paul because the saint had declared that both Jew and Greek were equal in the sight of Jesus, his God.

And so it came to pass that the hood of dark imaginings that had muffled the understandings of the Ruler was cast away from him. And it was the lie told him by his wife, and not the truth she had uttered concerning Paul, that had enlightened his soul.

He sought out the Magistrates of the town, and he spoke the words his wife chose for him. They were of great weight with these men, and they believed, as she had declared, that Nethan was one of the contentious Jews who strive to raise disputations and to cause the men of other nations to war with one another.

They learned from the husband of Eulia the tales she had contrived, when, without knowing but through divination, she had declared that Paul was driven forth from Thessalonica by the plots of Nethan.

The noble Greeks of Berea closed their doors to the enemy of Paul. And they went unto the Synagogue so that they might hearken to his teaching and study the truths taught by him.

Paul rested for a space in that town, waiting for a call to come to him from Thessalonica. He had learned that there were divisions

among the Brethren in that city. Evagrius and Jason were not agreed in matters of doctrine, and Paul feared lest the Church should be cleft asunder, and thus might be weakened, and peradventure perish.

Howbeit, Nethan was one who could not be turned from his purpose. There did burn within him such deep anger he could not find peace even in the night-time. And, so tormented was he by his jealousy of Paul, he went once more to Berea. He journeyed privily, and did not make known his presence to many.

Now some of the Jews in Berea were not content, because so many Greeks hearkened unto Paul and strove to be first in the assembly of the faithful. They held that, because of the Promise, the Jews were the chosen of God ; and so Nethan came with his evil tales in an hour when certain of the Hebrews were prepared to welcome wicked words.

And he told them that it was the purpose of Paul to cast dishonour upon all Jews. The prophecy that in them all the nations of the earth would be blessed was one that Paul sought to undo by setting up as a God a Nazarene of ill fame.

Wherefore Paul was but a messenger of Satan. And he would sow discord among the members of the congregation, so that the order of the Synagogue would be overturned and faith in the living God would pass away.

Then would tribulation and hardship fall upon all because they had hearkened unto the servant of the Evil One.

Certain of the Jews made a vow that they would slay Paul, and they cast lots with one another as to the man who should seek out the saint and smite him so that he died.

And Nethan declared that Silas and Timothy were deceived by the words of Paul, and that no hurt should come to them. For they would follow the observances of Moses, and would work no harm among the people if the man of Tarsus was removed from their company.

The Jew knew that trouble would arise if the three saints were set upon ; for the Greeks were powerful, and would punish those who made an assault upon all.

Now a young man named Micah was chosen as the slayer of Paul, and he studied his ways, and learned that, after the labours of the day, it was the custom of the saint to rest for an hour, and then to go forth and teach the people in the cool of night.

Micah hid his weapon beneath his tunic and went unto the dwelling of Meliah, where Paul lodged. And Demas was standing nigh the door. And there was no other man or woman at hand.

The people were abroad ; it was a quiet hour and a time for a secret deed of blood.

And the Jew said unto Demas : " Is Paul, thy master, within ? For I bear him greetings from the Ruler of the Synagogue."

And Demas made answer, " Yea, it is the hour when he sleepeth. Let your greetings wait, and I will deliver them unto him when he is roused."

But Micah made pretence that he must deliver into the hand of Paul the letter that had been given him. And he told Demas that there was a tumult in the market-place, and that he should go and witness the turmoil, which concerned a certain stranger who had broken the law of the town.

And Demas went a little way, then did he turn himself about, returning to the door. And he came upon Micah, who was hastening from out the dwelling, his face strangely twisted, yellow as the lemon, and trouble in his eyes.

He would not tarry, nor would he answer Demas, who strove to stay him, and, fearing some evil, to question him concerning his haste.

Now, on that day, when Paul was passing along the road after his labours, an old woman, a slave of Eulia and a believer, asked him to halt and to come unto her mistress, who desired to hold speech with him.

And, when he excused himself, the woman besought him not to return to his dwelling.

He would not have hearkened to her if she had not plucked at his robe, holding it fast, declaring : " Master, it is according to foreknowledge. Go not to your dwelling ; rest not in it. On this eve the wind of the wandering dead is abroad. My heart is troubled for thee, O holy man. There is danger when the dead are not sleeping, but are about us and about thee, watching for the coming of another."

And Paul told the slave that her talk was foolishness. Howsoever, he followed her into the presence of Eulia ; and he perceived that this noble woman was vexed in spirit. And when the door was closed she declared that the old woman had been troubled for an hour or more. And she had the power of foreknowledge.

Then Paul answered that he feared naught, that he lived but to do the will of his Master Christ. And, when his hour was come, he would gladly face the torment of passing. And he spoke of the need for all the saints to be of good heart, to have faith, so that terror would be to them a thing of naught, which could no more stir the mind or draw from it the sour wine of anguish.

CHAPTER XXIX

HOW NETHAN'S PLOT BECAME KNOWN : IT IS DEEMED BETTER THAT
PAUL SHOULD LEAVE BEREAS : HE TAKES SHIP FOR ATHENS

THE husband of Eulia entered the chamber. As he stood upon the threshold of the room he cried out, " Paul the Seer hath been slain. Word has been borne to me that he slept upon his bed, and that one came and smote him with a knife, so that he yielded up the ghost."

Great was the amazement of the Gentile when the living man stepped forth from the shadow and uttered words that proved there was no hurt upon him, that he was whole in all his parts.

And the Gentile declared that he would go forth and seek true tidings concerning this tale. And he bade Paul rest within his house, for he feared that some mischief had been plotted against him.

After an hour or more Euxine returned in the company of Demas, and the two had together shaped the true chronicle, since they had gone among the people, gathering from them many tales that had been woven about the slaying of Paul, as it was called.

The one who had sought his life had entered into a dark room, and his sight was dimmed because of the shining brightness of the day without. He could not perceive with any sureness all the gloom contained. But, perceiving the bed, he smote it with a knife, and a child, who had not been seen by the slayer, cried out in fear.

This man of blood believed that the cry came from the lips of the saint, so he smote the robes that were heaped upon the bed, and, casting his weapon from him, fled from the chamber.

Now it was the knife of a Jew, and Euxine believed that some conspiracy had been made against Paul by the wicked men of Thessalonica, and that they would not rest until they destroyed him.

It is not easy in a town like Berea to hide from all dark deeds that have been contrived. And so it came to pass that, in the day that followed the deed of Micah, a Jew went unto the Ruler of the Synagogue and told him how five young men of their race had vowed they would slay Paul.

And this youth feared that the lot would fall to him, as Micah had failed. So he besought the Ruler to free him from his service, to send him to another town, for he would not shed the blood of one of his race. And he gave the names of his comrades to the

Ruler, when the Elder had promised he would not reveal them to those in authority.

He told this man that Nethan of Thessalonica had declared that Paul must die, else the whole race of the Jews would suffer grievously from him in the after-time.

And, as Nethan was powerful and dangerous as a poisoned spear, the Brethren besought Paul to depart from that land, and to bestow upon Silas and Timothy the charge of the Church.

They would wait there for a short space, and, if other Rulers were appointed in Thessalonica, they would return into that city, and set the Church in order and heal the rents that had been made in it.

And Euxine promised that he would seek to unwind the mischievous designs of the Jews, and he would mayhap so deal with them that Paul might come again to this land in peace, and the Gentiles would welcome him.

And, when this man promised he would thus remove the evil from the path of the saint, Paul consented to journey to the sea ; and he resisted no more the entreaties of the Brethren that he should depart, so that his life might be preserved.

Paul scorned danger, and was greatly distressed in mind that it should be deemed needful that he should leave the Brethren in this hour of uncertainty, when the Church was menaced by those who should have welcomed it from their hearts.

And Eulia strove to comfort him, saying : " Strange and pure as the wild flowers of dawn have been thy words, O great master, and we shall always study them and treasure them as the most precious of gifts. In a short space this evil plot will be revealed, and thou shalt return from Athens. Then shalt thou win all the souls in this land for Christ."

So Paul departed once again in the night-time, journeying to the sea and taking ship for Athens. He was much weakened by sickness when the heat of the season increased, and his strength was overcome by the pains that possessed his limbs.

Howbeit, once he was upon the sea, the sickness departed from him, and his soul was uplifted. He talked much with Demas, who had been in Athens in other times ; and he became glad of heart because he journeyed into the city that was known as the Well of the World's Wisdom.

And Paul declared his design unto the youth concerning Athens. In it abode many wise men, who, if they were persuaded that Jesus was the Messiah, might give of their knowledge to the service of the Master. Then would there be forged a noble weapon that would overturn the defences of the powers of darkness, that would cause

the men of learning throughout the Empire to hearken readily to the words of life.

Now Paul was one who builded great visions, who quarried from the depths of his being mighty works for Christ. And though at times he saw naught but decay and darkness before the people of his generation, in other hours, when he was eager and whole in body, he would believe that he could engirdle the whole earth with the Churches of Christ, and so prepare the multitude for His coming, few of the people would be lost and cast into the darkness of the Pit.

The winds were fair, and soon the ship drew nigh to Piræus, and Paul perceived the Shining Spear of Athens, as was named the gold weapon of its goddess.

He was stirred in mind, and gave thanks unto God, when he perceived the town of his dreams spread out before him. And he had the yearning of the reaper who goeth forth among the yellow blades of wheat, rejoicing in the rich harvest that will fall to his sickle.

The Word of Christ had been borne unto Rome, but no saint had preached in Athens. And it was esteemed to be far greater in wisdom than Rome, and far more wealthy in men of learning and discernment.

And Paul believed that he would capture the people of this town because they had searched through many generations for the hidden gold of truth; and so they would understand its worth when it was laid before them. All the people of Judæa would marvel if the students who thronged the schools in this town came to believe in the Messiah and in the coming of the Kingdom of God.

Oft-times, when Paul entered into strange cities, into new lands, he was fearful of spirit, and he would believe that failure must be his portion, that the Jews and Gentiles would not hearken to him.

But, in the hour when he entered the city of Athens, no dread possessed him. He believed that he would change the soul of this ancient town; that where there was so much wisdom there would be the mightier faith; and that men who had sought God zealously, though in foolish blindness, would be prepared to worship Him when the darkness was lifted from their sight.

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